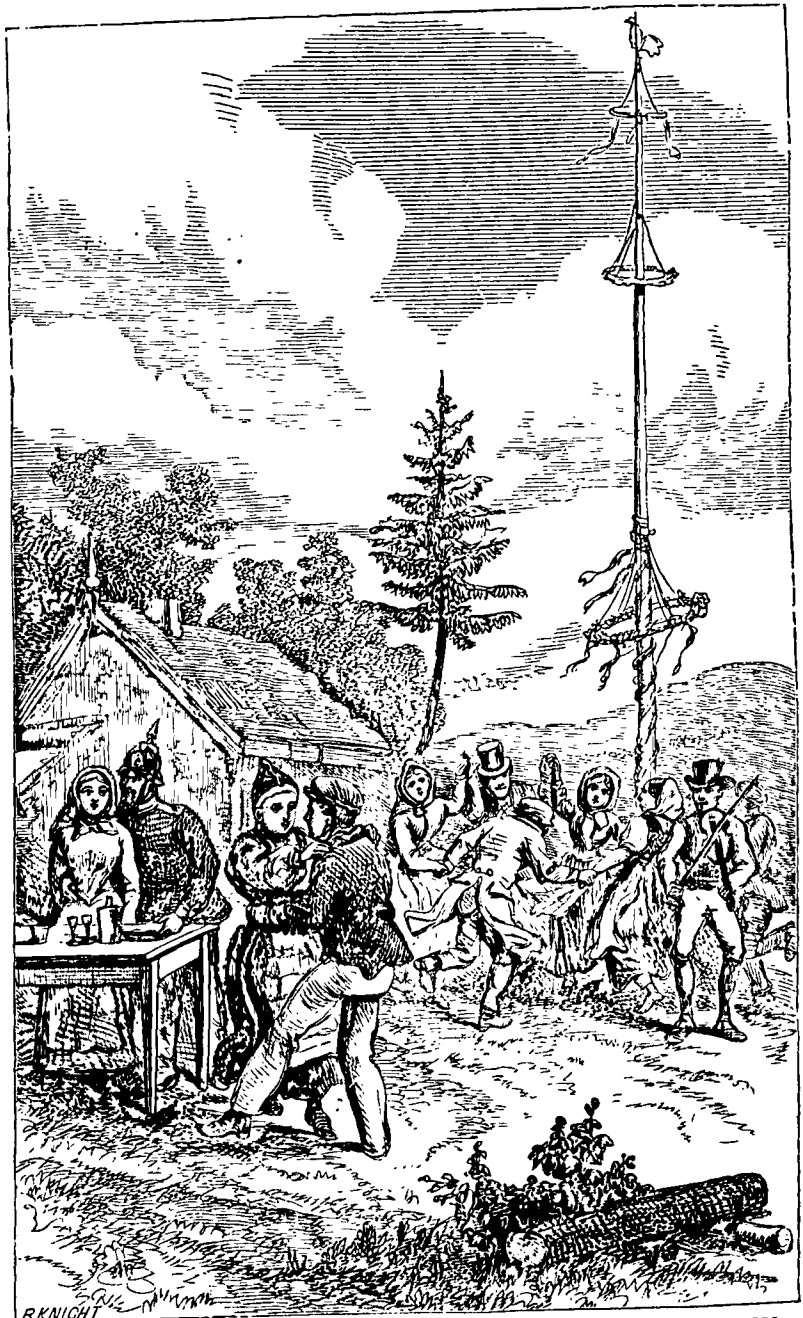
00056920

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018

PEASANT LIFE IN SWEDEN.



p. 259.

THE MAJ STÄNG, OR MAY POLE.

PEASANT LIFE IN SWEDEN.

By L. LLOYD.

56920

THE 'TOMTE GUBBE,' OR OLD MAN OF THE HOMESTEAD. p. 175.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18 CATHERINE ST., STRAND.
1870.

[*All rights reserved.*]

00056920

PEASANT LIFE IN SWEDEN.

BY L. LLOYD,

AUTHOR OF 'FIELD SPORTS OF THE NORTH OF EUROPE,'
'SCANDINAVIAN ADVENTURES,' 'GAME BIRDS OF SWEDEN,'
ETC., ETC., ETC.

Illustrated.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.
1870.

[*All rights reserved.*]

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

PREFACE.

HAVING of late years resided much in Sweden, it has struck me that some account of the way of life and habits of the peasantry, as also of their religious and other festivals, many of which date back to heathen times, might not be unacceptable to the English reader; the rather, as much of the blood of the old Northmen flows in our veins; and as light may be thereby thrown on many of our own customs, about which we are at present wholly, or in great part, in the dark.

Not a few of the popular superstitions of the country will, moreover, be found interspersed throughout these pages; and should this work meet with a favourable reception from the public, it is my intention to submit to it at no distant day a somewhat fuller account of them, together with other matter of a curious nature, with which we at home are but little acquainted.

As regards the customs here spoken of, it is to be observed, that though a few may have fallen into desuetude, the greater part are still retained, espe-

cially in mountainous and wooded districts, where people cling more tenaciously to the habits of their forefathers; and the like may be said of the superstitions, for where nature is on a wild and grand scale the mind is more prone to believe in the supernatural.

One chapter gives some account of the Swedish Church and its government; matters that have been somewhat misrepresented by recent English travellers. Another is devoted to the education, moral and religious, of the youth of both sexes; from which, perchance, our own legislators may take some useful hints.

Appended to the work will be found some of the numerous Fairy Tales and Giant Stories with which the Swedish peasantry are accustomed to beguile their long winter evenings.

For some of the illustrations I am indebted to my friend, Colonel Fritz Von Dardel, Aide-de-Camp to the King of Sweden, who is admitted by every one to be amongst the very first amateur artists in the country.

In conclusion, I would observe that as this book has been passed through the press during my absence from England, the reader will, perhaps, excuse any little inaccuracies that may have crept into it.

L. LLOYD.

Gothenburgh, June 25th, 1870.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.—THE SWEDISH PEASANTRY.

THE PEASANT OR *BONDE*—HIS IMPORTANCE.—IN THE OLDEN TIME.—STORY OF ASBJÖRN ... ... PAGES 1—13

CHAPTER II.—WEDDING CUSTOMS.

BETROTHAL.—THE BRIDE'S PINES.—THE PROCESSION.—ATTENDANT KNIGHTS.—SERVICE IN CHURCH.—THE CHURCH CORONET.—SERVICE IN A PRIVATE HOUSE.—THE BANQUET.—TOASTS.—AMUSEMENTS.—THE 'SYSKON SÄNG.'—HUNT FOR THE BRIDE.—THE RICE PUDDING.—HURRAHS AND FLIPP ... ... 14—31

CHAPTER III.—WEDDING CUSTOMS IN WAREND, WANGA, DELSBY, WESTBO.

THE MAY-POLE.—PRIVILEGES OF THE WAREND WOMEN.—MODES OF DRESSING THE HAIR IN WANGA.—THE STOMACHER.—IMMORAL CUSTOMS IN DELSBY.—PECULIAR CUSTOMS AT DELSBY AND WESTBO 32—54

CHAPTER IV.—WEDDING CUSTOMS IN OTHER LOCALITIES.

PECULIAR CUSTOMS IN HAFVERO, RACKEBY, KULLINGS AND GÄSENED, DANMARK, TORNÅ,—IN FLEDIE, FJELIE, AND LOMMA,—IN SÄBROO, RÖFSUNDS, SVEG, HEDESUNDÅ, WISSERUM ... ... 55—71

CHAPTER V.—WEDDING CUSTOMS IN THE OLDEN TIMES, AND ORDINANCES RESPECTING THEM FROM A.D. 1644—1742.

BETROTHAL.—MAIDEN'S EVE AND BACHELOR'S EVENING.—CASTING THE SPEAR.—THE BARBER.—THE FIRST BORN BABY.—THE FOREST JOURNEY.—PARTING SCENE.—SACREDNESS OF MARRIAGE.—ORDINANCES FROM 1644—1742 ... ... 72—83

CHAPTER VI.—SUPERSTITIONS RELATING TO MARRIAGE, PREGNANCY, AND CHILDREN.

THE EVIL EYE.—THE NIGHTMARE ... ... 84—95

CHAPTER VII.—BAPTISM IN WINGÅKER, DANMARK, WESTBO, AND BOHUS LAN, IN THE OLDEN TIMES.

CONFIRMATION.—ORDINANCES FROM A.D. 1644—1686.—SPONSORSHIP. SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING BAPTISM.—'CHURCHING;' SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING IT ... ... 96—110

CHAPTER VIII.—FUNERALS.

FUNERALS IN THE OLDEN TIMES.—CUSTOMS IN BOHUS LAN.—PERSONALIA, OR ACCOUNTS OF THE DECEASED READ IN CHURCH.—CUSTOMS IN WESTBO HARAD; IN DANMARK; IN TORNA HARAD; IN HELLESUND; IN UPPER ELFDALEN.—ORDINANCES FROM A.D. 1644—1731. —SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH-YARD.—ORDINANCES OPPOSED TO IT. —THE NORTH SIDE. — ABOLITION OF CATHOLIC RITES. — SUPERSTITIONS ... ... 111—135

CHAPTER IX.—FUNEBRIA.

INSTANCES OF NON-DECOMPOSITION.—OF EMBALMMENT.—OF RESUSCITATION ... ... 136—145

CHAPTER X.—SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING DISEASES.

CURE BY STEPPING OVER A GRAVE. — BY FOOD FROM ANOTHER'S LARDER.—IMAGINARY REMEDIES FOR COLIC, TOOTH-ACHE, EAR-ACHE, HOOPING-COUGH, LUMBAGO, STIES, BOILS, STENVRID, SCROFULA, THE HICCUPS, DROPSY, WARTS, CORNS, THE SCAB, EPILEPSY, HOARSENESS, SYPHILIS, THE AGUE (TROLL STORY), VIOLENT PAINS, SPITTING BLOOD.—EFFICACY OF CONSECRATED WAFERS.—SPITTING AND THE BLOOD OF MALEFACTORS.—THE CUCKOO.—ASSISTANCE IN PARTURITION.—AUGURIES ... ... 146—161

CHAPTER XI.—CHRISTMAS.

WHY NAMED JUL.—JUL IN THE OLDEN TIME.—FREJS BOAR.—BRAGE GOBLET.—THE BOAR SEHRIMNER.—JUL FRID.—JUL SUPERSEDED BY CHRISTMAS.—PREPARATIONS FOR JUL.—THE JUL CROSS.—JUL PINES. —THE POOR AND THE SPARROWS.—DECORATION OF ROOM.—JUL HALM, OR RYE STRAW.—VISIT TO THE COW-HOUSE, STABLE, WATCH-DOG, BATH-HOUSE.—THE JUL FIRE, CANDLES, GIFTS, BANQUET. — ANGELS' ALE.—TOMTE GUBBE, OR ELF.—OTHER SUPERSTITIONS ... 162—178

CHAPTER XII.—CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.—MUSIC, OR BALLADS.—DANCES.—SACRIFICIAL DANCE.—LOVE-TOKENS.—CHRISTMAS DOLL.—PUSH JOB.—JUL CLUB.—CHRISTMAS OLD WOMAN.—JUL GOAT.—JUL BOAR.—RUPERT THE SOLDIER.—'SITTING GAMES.'—DIVINING ... ... 179—187

CHAPTER XIII.—CHRISTMAS LEGENDS.

ON JUL NIGHT EVIL SPIRITS ABROAD.—HOW HERNE ULF BEHEADED A TROLL.—HOW A PAGE CARRIED OFF A TROLL HORN AND GOBLET, AND DIED.—THE SONG OF THE KNIGHT AND THE TROLL MAIDEN. THE *ÅRS GÅNG* OF PILGRIMAGE IN QUEST OF THE SUPERNATURAL.—HOW THE DEAD CELEBRATE DIVINE SERVICE, AND HOW A LADY AND HER MAID SAW THEM ... ... 188—200

CHAPTER XIV.—CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

CHRISTMAS DAY. — CHURCH SERVICE. — QUIET FAMILY LIFE. — ST STE-

PHEN'S DAY.—STAFFAN, THE SWEDISH ST STEPHEN.—HIS LABOURS, MARTYRDOM, GRAVE, WORSHIP.—STAFFAN'S '*SKEDE*,' OR RACE, AND BALLAD.—NEW YEAR'S EVE.—SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING THE NEW MOON AND NEW YEAR'S DAY.—TWELFTH DAY.—BETHLEHEM STAR.—STAR BOYS.—TAKING A WIFE.—ST KNUT'S DAY ... 201—218

CHAPTER XV.—CANDLEMAS TO EASTER.

CANDLEMAS DAY.—STORY OF DISA.—HEALTH TO ELDSBORGS.—ANNUNCIATION DAY, CALLED HJETTE DAY.—SUPERSTITIONS.—GOOD FRIDAY. — LEGENDS OF THE DWARF BIRCH, — THE ASPEN TREE. — THE SWALLOW.—THE TURTLE DOVE.—THE CROSSBILL.—THE STORK.—THE LAPWING.—EASTER EVE.—HARD EGGS.—EASTER DAY.—ANCIENT CUSTOMS.—SUPERSTITIONS.—WITCH JOURNEY TO BLÅ KULLA 219—232

CHAPTER XVI.—MAY DAY AND HOLY ROOD DAY.

MAY DAY.—BONFIRES.—VISIONS.—MAY SONGS.—BATTLE OF WINTER *v.* SUMMER.—INTERMENT OF WINTER.—MUSIC AND DANCING.—MAGPIE FEAST.—SUPERSTITIONS.—TROLL HARES.—HOLY ROOD DAY.—LEGEND OF THE HOLY CROSS.—THE 'WANDERING JEW' ... 233—243

CHAPTER XVII.—FROM ST HALFVARD'S DAY TO HOLY TRINITY DAY.

ST HALFVARD'S DAY.—ST ERIC'S DAY.—THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING.—THE SÄTER. — THE JOURNEY THERE. — THE SÄTER STUGA. — THE OCCUPATIONS THERE. — THE WILD BEASTS. — THE CARESSIVE NAMES FOR THEM.—THE RETURN TO THE HOMESTEAD.—ASCENSION DAY.—SUPERSTITIONS. — WHITSUNTIDE. — GREENWICH HILL.—HOLY TRINITY DAY ... ... 244—255

CHAPTER XVIII.—MIDSUMMER.

MIDSUMMER VIGILS.—PREPARATIONS IN COUNTRY;—IN STOCKHOLM.—THE LEAF MARKET.—BALDER'S FIRES.—THE MAJ STÄNG, OR MAY-POLE. — THE DANCE. — PICNIC IN NORRLANDS. — SACRED SPRINGS — THEIR VIRTUES. — LEGENDS. — THE IMMOVABLE CROSS. — PARSON MELCHIOR.—THE LADY OF HUSHBERGET.—MYSTIC NIGHT.—SUPERSTITIONS. — THE STAG RUTA. — MIDSUMMER QVAST. — THE PANCAKE AND MISTLETOE.—MIDSUMMER DAY ... ... 256—270

CHAPTER XIX.—FESTIVALS FROM JUNE TO CHRISTMAS.

CHEESE MEETINGS. — ST PETER'S DAY. — LEGENDS OF ST PETER. — ST OLAF'S DAY.—OLAF'S LIFE.—MIRACLES WROUGHT BY HIS BODY.—ALTAR-PIECE REPRESENTING HIM AS HE TRIUMPHED OVER A TROLL.—LEGEND OF THE ALTAR-PIECE.—HOP-PICKING.—EVENING SEASONS FOR TALE-TELLING.—ST MICHAEL'S DAY, AND SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING IT.—HARVEST HOME.—ST LUCIE'S DAY.—LEGEND OF ST LUCIE.—THE TIARA OF LIGHT ... ... 271—287

CHAPTER XX.—THE LAW.

LITIGATION.—THE LAWS.—CONSTITUTION OF COURTS.—DEFECTS IN THE

LAW. — ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. — JUDGES NOT IMMACULATE. — CRIMINAL LAW.—CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS.—BREAD AND WATER.—FLOGGING.—MANNER OF EXECUTION.—EXPOSURE OF BODIES 288—294

CHAPTER XXI.—SCHOOLS.

EDUCATION COMPULSORY.—PEOPLE'S SCHOOLS, PREPARATORY, STATIONARY, AND MOVABLE.—ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, UPPER AND LOWER.—PRIVATE SCHOOLS.—GYMNASTICS.—THE UNIVERSITIES.—FEMALE EDUCATION. — SEMINARIUM. — PRIVATE GIRLS' SCHOOLS. — CLERICAL INSTRUCTION.—THE HOUSE EXAMINATION ... ... 295—307

CHAPTER XXII.—THE SWEDISH CHURCH.

THE NATIONAL CHURCH.—THE CLERGY.—CHURCH REVENUES.—INCOMES OF THE CLERGY.—THE UNIVERSITIES.—CHOICE OF BISHOPS.—NATURE OF BENEFICES. — FREE LIVINGS. — COMPETITORY SERMONS. — STATUS AND DRESS OF THE SWEDISH CLERGY.—THE CHURCH DIET.—THE CHURCHES.—THE SERVICE.—NOTICES FROM THE PULPIT.—THE CUTTY-STOOL.—THE SACRAMENT.—SECTARIANS.—THE LÄSARE.—THE CHARTAUARNE.—INTOLERANCE ... ... 308—324

CHAPTER XXIII.—THE ARMY AND NAVY.

THE BEWÄRING, OR ARMED DEFENCE.—THE VOLUNTEERS.—THE MILITIA.—EFFICIENT CHARACTER OF THE ARMY.—THE NAVY.—THE NAVY OF THE ISLANDS.—TRANSITION STATE OF THE SEAGOING NAVY 325—330

CHAPTER XXIV.—MODERN RECREATIONS AND ANCIENT SPORTS.

SPINNING PARTIES.—THE SCANDAL TANKARD.—LUND HORSE FAIR.—BARBAROUS MANNER OF FIGHTING.—ANCIENT EXERCISES: VAULTING, CLIMBING, RUNNING, SWIMMING, WRESTLING.—PRACTICE IN THE USE OF ARMS.—SKATING.—HOCKEY.—THE SWORD GAME.—THE CHASE.—AN OLD NORSEMAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SON.—A CONTRAST 331—344

CHAPTER XXV.—CHARACTER OF THE PEASANTRY.

CHARACTER OF THE MEN AND WOMEN.—WANT OF CHASTITY.—LAWS.—CHASTITY OF OLD.—LAWS.—HOW LEJDOLF WAS PUNISHED.—MISDEEDS OF THE MONKS.—A MONK CAUGHT IN A NET.—A MONK WARNED BY A LULLABY. — MONKISH SUPERSTITIONS. — TALE OF THE CHARMED BAG.—EXPULSION OF THE MONKS ... ... 345—356

CHAPTER XXVI.—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

FEW SURNAMES. — DRESS. — DRESS IN WINGÅKER. — CIRCUMSTANCES. — HOUSES.—FURNITURE.—GARDENS.—FOOD AND DRINK.—BARK BREAD.—DIRTY HABITS.—EARLY RISING.—HOME MANUFACTURES.—ITINERANT SHOEMAKERS AND TAILORS. — SMOKING. — DRUNKENNESS — LAW AGAINST IT. — SWEARING — LAW AGAINST IT. — POOR LAWS.—SUMMARY ... ... 357—373

SWEDISH LEGENDS ... ... 374—479

PEASANT LIFE IN SWEDEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE SWEDISH PEASANTRY.

THE PEASANT OR *BONDE*—HIS IMPORTANCE.—IN THE OLDEN TIME.
" STORY OF ASBJÖRN.

BEFORE describing the customs and ways of the Swedish '*Bonde*,'* or peasant, it may be proper to say a few words as to who and what he is.

Though the above designation, correctly speaking, pertains only to the man who tills his own land, it at present is just as commonly applied to the '*Torpare*,' or he who rents from another a '*Torp*,' or cottage, with a small allotment of ground attached; and as regards the rural districts—where, however, he is hardly to be found—to the mere day labourer. In common parlance, in short, every small occupier of land, whether owned by himself or leased, is called a 'Bonde.'

As well by law as custom, the peasantry, it should be remarked, constitutes a distinct class both in Sweden and Norway; and however wealthy any individual peasant may

* So named from the verb '*Bo*,' or to reside.

be—and very many possess large and well-stocked farms—he still retains not only the dress and manners of his order, but to a considerable extent the customs of his ancestors. Until within the past two or three years, indeed, when the '*Bonde Stånd*,' or peasant class, formed one of the four estates of the realm,* he was, as its representative, entitled not only to take a leading part in the legislation of his country, but at the royal entertainments given at the palace when the parliament was sitting, to take his place at the king's banqueting table, clad in the garb of his order—a simple long coat of home-made woollen cloth—on terms of equality, so to say, with the first nobles in the land. At the present day, however, there are only two chambers, equal in power, but differently constituted, the members of the second being elected by nearly universal suffrage, and those of the first by the municipality of each province. The members of the second are paid for their services, whereas those eligible to the first must have a certain minimum property, and this chamber is therefore supposed to represent the wealth and the more conservative element of the nation.

Thus it will be seen that though the Swedish 'Bonde' is, in the usual acceptation of the word, a peasant, his position, that of the 'Bonde' proper, at least, is in reality that of a yeoman. But be it what it may, it is very certain he is the bone and sinew of the country.

In the olden times, however,—I speak of those of the famous Sea Kings, the terror of all civilized countries,—the

* These consisted of the nobles, the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants.

Swedish 'Bonde' held a very superior position to that which he fills at the present day. Neither the feudal system nor vassalage having ever existed in Sweden or Norway,* he called himself, and with every justice, a free-born man. And as, excepting those who governed or held office under the Crown, no titles such as Count or Baron then existed in Scandinavia, his class was the most influential and powerful in the kingdom.

The peasantry of bygone days, in fact, constitutes the nation itself, or rather the several nations into which, during the time of the petty kings, the northern peninsula was divided. Many of the peasantry were then large landed proprietors and the leading men of the country We read, for instance, of a Skoglar Toste becoming the father-in-law of two kings, whose sons were received into his house, and accompanied him on his buccaneering expeditions; of an Åke, in Wermeland, who invited and entertained at the same time the kings of both Sweden and Norway, together with all their retainers, in a patriarchal and most hospitable manner, and on the departure of the sovereigns, presenting each with large gifts; of a Håkan, surnamed the '*Gamle*,' or old, who defended a fugitive king's son and his desolate mother against the power of the reigning monarch.

These peasants, and others their equals, competed in power and consideration with such as bore princely rank, and looked on themselves as their equals in every way. When, for example, King Harald, surnamed '*Härfager*,'

* So say Scandinavian historians; but, from what I can gather from the old chronicles, the great proprietors would seem to have had something like unto the power of life and death over their serfs or retainers.

or the beautiful-haired, would persuade a rich peasant in Norway, named Kittel, to enter his service, offering him at the same time lands and a title, the man declined the sovereign's proposal, saying, 'he would rather be a peasant, in which character he looked on himself as quite equal to those who bore names of higher honour.'

Many similar instances to the above might be quoted from the 'Sagas,' but the following story, which is not without interest in more respects than one, will best explain the social position, and the weight and influence, of the class in question.

One Sigurd Thoreson, a rich and powerful peasant of Arund, or Throndenäs, in Norway, was in the habit every year, so long as heathenism prevailed in that country, to hold three 'sacrificial feasts' to the gods—the first at the commencement of the winter, the second at midwinter, and the third in the spring; and even after he had embraced Christianity he continued the same, as regarded the banquets, at least.

At his death his son Asbjörn, then only 18 years of age, followed up the custom of his father. One year there was a total failure of the crops; but having corn of the preceding season in his granary, he nevertheless gave the usual entertainments. The succeeding harvest also proved a miserable one, on which his mother, Sigrid, was desirous he should at least curtail the number of the festivals. Asbjörn, however, would not listen to her remonstrances, but went amongst his relatives and friends, and having partly by purchase, and partly by presents, obtained the requisite quantity of grain, all the merry-makings took place as usual. But the third year proved

a dearth likewise, and to make the matter worse, intelligence was received from the more southern parts of the country, that the King Olof, surnamed '*Digre,*' or the Obese, had, in consequence of the prevailing scarcity, strictly forbidden grain, malt, or meal to be sent from thence to the northern districts. In spite of all these discouraging circumstances, nevertheless, Asbjörn was determined on having his banquets as customary.

He possessed a very good trading vessel, and of a size sufficient to navigate the open sea, which was fitted with a streaked or parti-coloured sail. This he launched, and taking with him 20 of his own people, put to sea. In the south of Norway is an island called in former times Karmt, but at present Karmen. Here was a large and handsome royal residence, with an extensive domain attached, called Ogvaldsnäs, over which ruled a steward or sheriff, named Thorer Sel. He was a man of low origin, but active, fluent of speech, full of big words, and fond of gaudy apparel; and now that the king's authority was delegated to him, he well knew how to make use of these qualities.

Asbjörn arrived at the island in question late one evening, anchored his vessel near to the 'King's Gärd,' set up an awning, or tent, as it was then called, over her in the usual manner to protect the men from the weather, and remained there during the night. Thorer, on the following morning, inquired his destination? Asbjörn replied,—'There is scarcity of grain in the north, but we are informed that here the harvest was good. Wilt thou, therefore, peasant, dispose of some to us? I see around me,' he went on to say, 'many stacks of corn: it would be

a great convenience to us not to be necessitated to extend our voyage.' 'This convenience I shall render thee,' rejoined Thorer in a supercilious tone, 'as to inform thee that thou hast no need to proceed further in Ragoland (the name of the district) 'to purchase grain; for I will tell thee this: that neither here nor elsewhere in these parts canst thou obtain it, because the king has prohibited any being sent away from hence to the north. Return home again, therefore, "Helgolander,"* that is the best course for thee to pursue.'

Asbjörn and his men took down the awning spoken of, rowed round into the open sea, set sail, and stood away to the southward, and in the evening reached the island of Jader, where Erling Skialgsson, his uncle, dwelt.

Erling welcomed his relative; was rejoiced at his arrival, placed him next to himself at table, and inquired the news of the northern parts of the country. After that Asbjörn had satisfied his curiosity, and informed him of the object of his voyage, Erling observed: 'It is unfortunate that the king should have forbidden the sale of grain from these parts. I know no man in this neighbourhood who would dare to disobey his commands; and as there are many who endeavour to disturb the good understanding that exists between Olof (the king) and myself, I must therefore be careful not to offend him in this matter.' Asbjörn heard all this with astonishment, was silent for a time, but at length said:—'The truth is always long in reaching one's ears. It was told me from

* Not the island of *Heligoland*, as some might possibly suppose, but of *Helgoland*, a widely-extended district in the more northern part of Norway.

my youth that my mother was "free-born" through all her ancestors, and that Erling of Sala was the most distinguished of all her kinsfolk; but I now hear thee thyself say that the king's slave, Thorer, allows thee not so much liberty as that here, on Jader, thou canst do with thy own grain according to thy pleasure.'

Erling looked at Asbjörn, smiled, and replied:—'You dwellers in Helgoland know less of the king's power than we in Ragoland. A braggart thou art said to be at home, relation, and in this matter thou dost not differ from others of thy family. We will now first drink together, and to-morrow see what can be done to serve thee.'

They repaired together to the wassail board, and enjoyed themselves during the evening; and on the following morning Erling thus addressed Asbjörn:—'I have thought much on the affair that brought thee here, relation. Art thou particular as to the party of whom thou makest thy purchases?' and when assured by his nephew that, provided it was from the rightful owner, it made not the slightest difference, Erling went on to say 'that his slaves, who did not stand under the same Landslaw as other men, had, he believed, as much corn to dispose of as Asbjörn needed.'

The hint was taken, and the bargain soon concluded. Asbjörn loaded his vessel with grain and malt, and after receiving valuable presents from Erling, steered, with a favourable wind, homewards, and in the evening came to an anchor near Ogvallsnäs.

During the night Thorer Sel, the king's sheriff, as said, collected his men—60 in number—and with this

force proceeded at an early hour in the morning to Asbjörn's vessel; upbraided him with warmth for the contempt he had shown to the sovereign's commands, and threatened that unless he and his people went at once on shore he would throw the whole of them overboard; 'for we will not,' he added, 'have you in the way whilst we take out the grain.'

The cargo having been discharged, Thorer proceeded to the fore-part of the vessel, when casting his eyes on the streaked sail spoken of, he observed to his men, 'A wonderfully fine sail have these Helgolanders! Take it from them, and give them in its stead the old one belonging to our trading vessel; it is quite good enough for people who sail with an empty ship.'

The exchange in question having been effected, Asbjörn was allowed to depart, when he made the best of his way back to his home at Throndenäs; and as the necessary supplies were now wanting, no festival took place that winter, neither did he visit any of his relations. His late adventure became much known and talked of, and was the subject of not a few ill-natured remarks. But Asbjörn confined his wrath within his own breast, and awaited quietly at home the approach of spring.

As soon, however, as the water was open, he launched his war-galley of 20 banks of oars, with a crew of 90 well-armed men, consisting partly of his friends and relations, and partly of his own retainers, and sailed away to the southward.

On the fifth day of Easter they reached the island of Karmt, when Asbjörn went on shore alone, that he might reconnoitre the localities. From an eminence that he

ascended, and from whence he had a view of Ogvallsnäs, he remarked that much people, both by sea and land, were directing their course towards the house. Making up to the latter, he entered one of the detached buildings, where the servants were busy with culinary operations, and by them was informed that King Olof had arrived, which explained the cause of so much bustle and preparation.

Having learnt thus much, he proceeded into the royal residence, and posted himself in the passage leading to the banqueting hall; and though people were constantly going in and out, no one took notice of his presence. The door of the apartment stood open, so that he could see and hear all that passed within it. The king was seated at the table; Thorer Sel stood in front of it, and was relating a long 'Saga,' as to what had passed between himself and Asbjörn, in which he, in many respects, greatly deviated from the truth. Some one inquired of him how the latter had conducted himself when his vessel was taken forcible possession of and unloaded. Thorer replied, 'that whilst the cargo was being discharged he was tolerably tranquil, but when the sail was taken away from him he actually shed tears.' Up to this time Asbjörn had had sufficient control over himself as to remain passive; but when he was accused of having wept—a charge of the most scandalous nature in the eyes of the old Northmen—he could no longer restrain his passion, but drawing his sword, he rushed forward into the banqueting hall, and up to Thorer, and at a single blow severed his head from his body. The head of the steward rolled on to the table before the king, the trunk fell at his feet, and the floor and the table-cloth was drenched with the man's blood!

Asbjörn was immediately seized and put in irons,—Skialg Erlingsson, a son of Erling Skialgsson, and first cousin to Asbjörn, was of the royal retinue, and present on the occasion in question. He arose from his seat, and offered to ransom his kinsman's life, as was customary in those days. 'Is it not a crime worthy of death,' replied the king, 'for any one to break the sacred peace of Easter? and is it not a second crime deserving of condign punishment to commit a homicide in the actual presence of the sovereign? and is it not a third crime that my feet have been converted into a beheading block?' But Skialg made yet another attempt to prevail on the monarch to accept of a pecuniary fine in satisfaction of the offence. The king, however, turned a deaf ear to this application also. 'Although I hold thee, Skialg, in high estimation,' said the monarch, 'I must not for thy sake break the laws of the country, and dishonour the royal dignity.'

Seeing that any further efforts of his on Asbjörn's behalf would prove fruitless, Skialg now retired from the presence, and, followed by his men, 12 in number, left the banqueting hall. The evening was then far advanced, but he nevertheless hurried to his galley, and after rowing hard during the whole night, reached the island of Jader as the day broke on the following morning.

So soon as he had set foot on land, he hurried up to his father's house, and knocked at the portal with such violence that the fastenings gave way, and all the inmates awoke at the same time. Erling arose from his couch, took his sword and buckler, and hastened to the door, and inquired who it was that made such an uproar?—and when he distinguished the voice of his son, he added, 'I might

well have supposed it could only be thee thyself who acts thus madly.' 'Although thou thinkest me impetuous,' Skialg rejoined, 'Asbjörn, who is lying in chains at Ogvallsnäs, will not consider my haste unseemly, and it will be a manly action on thy part if thou proceed to his rescue.'

The father and son now took counsel together as to the best course to be pursued in the emergency.

Sunday arrived. The king and all his people were in the church, and before its portal stood Asbjörn, loaded with chains and surrounded by the guard. When Divine service was over, and the monarch came from out the sacred edifice, he, to his utter astonishment, saw the prisoner freed from his fetters, and a line of armed men drawn upon either side of the road the whole distance to the royal residence. At the entrance to the latter stood Erling and his sons, who had collected together 1500 armed men. The chieftain made his obeisance to the sovereign, and addressed him thus: 'It is told me that my relation, Asbjörn, has committed a great fault; and it is much to be lamented, king, if what has happened has caused thee displeasure. I am now, therefore, come here to offer thee atonement, and such ransom as it may be thy pleasure to award; but I at the same time require that he may retain life and limb; as also that he be permitted to remain in the country.' A conference then took place between the king and Erling, which, though at first promising an amicable settlement of the affair, afterwards assumed a very different aspect. At last Erling said, 'I will not conceal from thee, king, my wishes in this matter, viz., that we part reconciled; if that cannot

be, it seems to me best I should not again seek an interview with thee.' Erling's face was then as red as blood. The bishop, Sigurd, now stepped forward and said to the sovereign, 'Lord, I pray thee, in God's name, that thou wilt be friends with Erling, the rather as he only insisted on the man's retaining life and limb, and leaves all the rest to thy good pleasure.' Moved by this address of the prelate, and Erling offering at the same time to become security for the fulfilment of the conditions, the monarch at length gave his acquiescence.

The terms, afterwards promulgated, on which the king pardoned the homicide, ran thus: 'Asbjörn, thou shalt submit to that particular provision of the laws of our land, that he who kills a servant of the king shall, if the sovereign so wills it, fill the post held by the deceased. It is now, therefore, my pleasure that thou takest upon thyself the duties of steward, which were performed by Thorer Sel, and that thou assume the management of my property here at Ogvallsnäs.' Asbjörn consented, but requested he might first be permitted to return home to set his affairs in order, which petition was granted.

On his arrival, however, at Throndenäs, and when his relations had learnt what had happened, they said to him: 'The first of thy journeys to the southward was, in all respects, an ignominious affair; nevertheless, under the circumstances, there was no help for what then took place; but the last, should it end in thy becoming the king's slave, and the like of that miserable creature, Thorer Sel, will be a disgrace not only to thee, but all thy kindred. Conduct thyself now in so manly a way that thou remain here on thy property, in which case we, thy relations, will

stand by thee, so that thou shalt never again come in a like strait.' 'This counsel,' the "*Sagas*" go on to relate, 'agreeing with Asbjörn's own views of the matter, he therefore followed, and wisely stopped at home.'

CHAPTER II.

WEDDING CUSTOMS.

BETROTHAL.—THE BRIDE'S PINES.—THE PROCESSION.—ATTENDANT KNIGHTS.—SERVICE IN CHURCH.—THE CHURCH CORONET.—SERVICE IN A PRIVATE HOUSE.—THE BANQUET.—TOASTS.—AMUSEMENTS.—THE 'SYSKON SÄNG.'—HUNT FOR THE BRIDE.—THE RICE PUDDING.—HURRAHS AND FLIPP.

HAVING now made the reader acquainted with who and what the Swedish 'Bonde,' or peasant, really is, I will proceed to speak of his customs and manner of living; and as for a man to take unto himself a wife is, perhaps, the most important step he can take in life, a description of the 'Bröllop,'* or wedding, claims, perhaps, the first place in these pages: and on this subject I shall go into considerable detail; for though there may be some little repetition in the narrative, still much may be gained from

* The learned differ as to the origin of this word. Some imagine it to be derived from the verb '*att Löpa*,' to run; hence '*Brud-lopp*,' or the bride's run, thus assuming that formerly the bride ran to the church. But this meaning can hardly hold good, because, both in heathen and Christian times, the bride has always been conducted with much ceremony and parade, either riding on horseback or in a carriage of some kind, to the place where the wedding was to be celebrated. Correctly speaking, the word is '*Brudloft*,' that is '*Brudlöfte*,' or bridal promise (a betrothal). From the days of heathenism, when, without preamble, the betrothal and wedding took place on one and the same day, originated, beyond doubt, the term '*Bröllop*,' or that now in general use to designate a marriage.

it as to the ideas and ways of living of the class treated of in this work.

But as regards Sweden, it is proper to observe the institution in question has two different origins, namely, the one derived from heathen times, and the other from those subsequent to the introduction of Christianity into the country, when a marriage was celebrated with solemn rites. At this day one meets with both heathenish and Catholic customs and superstitions blended together. In the several provinces, as will be seen, they are strikingly different, and it may indeed be said they vary, more or less, in almost every *Härad.*'* The ground and origin of these customs it is difficult to ascertain. It at least requires a more intimate knowledge of past ages, and of the disposition and customs of the people, than any we now possess.

In the province of Bohus, that of which I shall first speak as to the manner in which affairs matrimonial are carried on, as also in some other parts of Sweden, and in Finland, the youth does not always court the girl in person, but employs a 'go-between,' a so-called '*Böneman*,' literally prayer-man, to prefer his suit to the fair one.

This important personage, who for the most part is an elderly peasant—one well acquainted with the parents, relatives, and property of both the youth and the maiden —proceeds alone, in the first instance, to settle the affair. A faithful representation of the disposition and circum-

* In the times I speak of, the historical Odin, or shortly afterwards, *Svithiod*, as Sweden was then called, constituted one vast camp, so to say, the inhabitants, from their warlike habit, existing in the sense of a '*Här*,' or armed body, and were, therefore, usually called '*Swea-här*,' or the Swedish army. In accordance with other military institutions, the country was, therefore, divided into '*Hundradi*,' or '*Härads*,' which designation they have retained to the present day.

stances of the suitor form the chief theme of his discourse, during which, however, he often exhibits a thorough knowledge of such parts of Holy Writ as bear on the subject in question, and amongst the rest the story of the young Tobias and his fellow-traveller is not forgotten. Should the maiden say '*Ja*,' or Yes, and that the parents give their consent, the following Sunday is, in most instances, appointed for the lover to pay his first visit to his intended, whom it often happens he has never before seen.

The 'Böneman' then presents his client to the girl, and inquires if he has not found her a promising youth for a husband. The young couple stand apart, it not being considered etiquette for them, in this stage of the business, to speak to each other. In the while the girl is occupied in knitting, or the like, and pretends not to be aware of the presence of her lover, 'who looks perfectly dumbfounded, and as if he had just fallen from the skies.'

When, through the agency of the 'Böneman,' or the efficacy of the youth's own prayers, matters have been satisfactorily arranged, a day is fixed for the betrothal, a ceremony that, in almost all instances, precedes the wedding.

For the most part this takes place in the presence of the relations and friends of both parties. Rings are, in the first instance, exchanged, followed by their taking each other by the hand, in confirmation of everlasting fidelity. In the mean while the company lay their hands on those of the contracting parties, as witnesses to the solemn engagement they have entered into, and subsequently shake hands with each of them, and wish them all manner of happiness.

Should the clergyman be present on the occasion, as is often the case, the contract assumes, I believe, a legal form, and can only be broken by mutual consent, or by appeal to the Ecclesiastical Court, which, in Sweden, as in England, is a somewhat tedious and expensive business. But supposing both parties are willing to annul the engagement, it may at any time be set aside.

Afterwards presents are exchanged between the betrothed parties; she, on her part, presents him with some trifle worked by her own fair hands, and he, in return, gives her, amongst other things, a prayer-book, on the cover of which is impressed, in golden letters, a heart, and some appropriate Bible words. With the more wealthy, however, these symbols of affection are often engraven on a small silver plate.

These preliminaries settled, the young couple are looked on in pretty much the same light as husband and wife. The Rev. Mr Holmberg, the historian of Bohus län, says, indeed, 'that in the island of Tjörn,' which, however, he describes as being a hundred years behind the rest of the province in regard to civilization, and contrary to all sense of modesty and propriety, 'they have taken it into their heads that the act of presenting the Psalm book confers the same privilege on the bridegroom as the benediction of the clergyman.'

The wedding seldom takes place until some time after the betrothal; weeks, in almost all instances, but it may be months, or even years. On its near approach great preparations are made at the house where the happy event is to be celebrated; the rooms being put in 'apple-pie'

order, and, if it be in the summer-time, are also decorated with leaves and flowers.

Without doors, moreover, the bride's spruce pines—that is, young fir trees of some 15 to 20 feet in height, divested of bark and branches to near the top, which forms a sort of crown, are raised on either side of the portal and at the entrance gate to the homestead, in honour of the bride.

What with relations, friends, and neighbours, the guests, should the parties be wealthy, are usually numerous; and as in many instances they are permitted to take their children with them, the number assembled at the house, old and young together, not unfrequently amount to a hundred or more.

It might be supposed that the expense of such an entertainment, lasting, as it commonly does, for several days, would be very considerable; but such is not exactly the case: for though mine host finds the needful liquors, the heads of the several families invited are expected to contribute to the general stock a so-called '*Förning*,' from the Swedish word *föra* bring, or supply of eatables, consisting of a cheese, several large cakes of bread, &c., &c., and that in sufficient quantities for the time the festivities are likely to continue, of which, when the invitations are issued, the guests are duly notified.

In some places the marriage is solemnized in the church, but at the present day it for the most part takes place either at the parsonage, or at the house of the parents of the '*Brud*,'* or bride. But in either case

* This word is, we are told, common to all the northern nations. In heathen times it was an honorary distinction for females, but at present only applies to a woman on her wedding-day.

when she, on the morning of her nuptials, puts on her bridal shoes, 'to which there should be neither buckles nor ties of any kind if she hopes to escape a difficult child-birth,' a silver coin must be placed in each of them, 'and money,' it is their belief, 'will then never be wanting to the young couple;' a superstition which originated in Catholic times; for when the priest on the nuptial day blessed the bride and bridegroom, it was supposed that everything they had about them was also blessed; and, as a necessary consequence, that the money in their pockets or elsewhere would 'fructify.'

When the bridal shoes are on her feet she must forthwith proceed to the '*Ladugård*'* (in parts of the country called the '*Fähus*'), or cattle house, as it is commonly translated, and milk one of the cows, 'when milk will never fail in her new home.'

Should the marriage take place in the church, the bride is attended by her tire-woman, for the most part the clergyman's wife, or other person of position. She it is who places the coronet (of which presently) on the head of the bride, signifying that the latter is queen of

* In the more northern parts of Sweden, at least, the 'Ladugård' is usually a somewhat capacious building, in which not only horned cattle, but sheep, goats, poultry, almost everything living, in short, about the homestead, are housed during the long and dreary winter, lasting generally for six or seven months. In the middle of the building is an open and large fireplace, over which hangs a huge cauldron, wherein forage of various kinds, with perhaps a little meal, is prepared for the cattle, &c. Here are, moreover, bedsteads, or rather cribs, at some feet from the ground, in which the girls who tend the cattle, sleep. What with a cheerful fire and its numerous inmates, who look the very picture of the 'happy family,' the 'Ladugård' of a cold winter's evening, when the wind howls and the snow falls thick, has quite an attractive appearance, and many are the times that I myself have there whiled away an hour or two very far from disagreeably.

the day. And as the lady who sits next to the queen is called—'*Drottsäta,*' so in like manner is the individual called whose place on the bridal-stool is nearest to the bride. This person and numerous bridesmaids, together with the bridegroom and the larger portion of the company, proceed to the sacred edifice in vehicles of one kind or another; but the musicians and the knights attendant on the bride, who are selected from amongst the most active and vigorous of the youths, are always mounted. The hats of these men are decorated with long flowing parti-coloured ribands, and their necks with loosely-tied kerchiefs, the ends of which flutter in the wind; and who, to do honour to their mistress, often ride at so break-neck a pace as not only to endanger their own safety, but that of the passers-by. This custom originated in the following way.

Some hundreds of years ago, when in Sweden 'might was right,' it not unfrequently happened that if a man took a fancy to a pretty girl, and wished to marry her, he neither asked her own consent nor that of her parents, but, armed to the teeth, and accompanied by his friend, would go to the house of the charmer, and, if persuasion availed not, carry her away by force. As a consequence, the father and brother were often slain in her defence. At other times the abduction took place when the girl was on the way to church to be married to some one else, when the lover and his companions would waylay the wedding party, and, after killing the bridegroom, bear away the bride in triumph to his own home. To guard against these atrocious proceedings, it was usual on the nuptial-day for a number of young men to escort the damsel to

and from the sacred edifice. Though a woman might thus be compelled to marry a man she hated, he who in so brutal a manner had carried her away from her home, and the murderer of her kinsfolk, she often in her heart bore deadly malice towards him; and, when opportunity offered, would revenge herself by either killing her husband, or even her own children.

On the arrival of the *cortège* at the church, near to which is usually erected a so-called triumphal arch, they all alight. A regular procession is now formed, when, after passing through the capacious porch, they enter the body of the latter, and, proceeding up the middle aisle—the musicians playing in the while some merry tune—take their seats in the front pews, which are left unoccupied for their special accommodation.

In the olden times people in the rural districts of Sweden usually went fully armed into the body of the church; but in the 13th century this custom was so far laid aside, that, before entering, they hung up their weapons in the porch; hence called the 'Vapenhus,' or place of arms, by which name it is commonly called even to the present day.

The bride is magnificently attired in her nuptial dress. For the most part this consists of black silk, and over it is a superfluity of parti-coloured ribands, silver ornaments, and artificial flowers. A belt, or girdle, encircles her waist, and strings of pearls her neck; and on her head she has either a coronet, composed at times of myrtle, though most commonly of coloured paper, and adorned with gold-leaf spangles, or the so-called church crown, a weighty coronet of silver, and most splendid to look on,

which most, if not all, rural churches in Sweden possess. By rights, it should only be worn by *virtuous girls*. But at the present day no great difficulty is made, I suspect, as to who puts it on. 'The old and deeply-rooted custom,' says Dr Wieselgren, the present dean of Gothenburgh, 'of not entering into the holy bonds of matrimony until the bride has "*bleknat*," literally, turned pale, or is in the family way, had its origin, no doubt, in heathenish times; and it was for the purpose of rooting out the evil custom that the Christian Church ordained that only chaste brides should wear the coronet at their marriage.'

The dress of the bridegroom is simple, differing but little from that in which he usually appears of a Sunday or other holiday.

Towards the conclusion of the service the bridal pair move up to the altar, and, at a certain point, kneel before it while the clergyman performs the usual ceremony, which, though simpler, somewhat resembles our own. The bridesmaids and men all the while hold a canopy, consisting of shawls and the like, over the heads of the happy couple, and when they have been united for better or worse, the bridal party retire to the seats they previously occupied.

The service over, and the clergyman having given his benediction, the bridal procession leaves the church in much the same order as on its entrance, the musicians in front playing some light tune or other.

On the only occasion of my being present at a wedding where the church coronet was worn by the bride, which was in Wemeland, the musicians were four in number, and all fiddlers; and as a man never looks particularly amiable

when playing on a violin, the introduction of these scrapers on cat-gut into the church detracted somewhat, to my notion, from the solemnity of the scene.

Should, however, the wedding take place at the bride's own house, or at the residence of a friend of the family, the clergyman, the male friends, and relations of the bridegroom assemble at the house of the latter, where, without being seated, they are hospitably entertained; and from thence they accompany the happy man to the abode of his beloved.

Just before reaching it, however, a halt is commanded, and two or more of the party ride forward to announce the coming of the cavalcade, and on its arrival, the cup of welcome is brought by the host, and quaffed with acclamation in the open air by every one; and should any wayfarer be passing at the same time, he is always invited to partake of the contents of the tankard.

All now alight, and the bridegroom and his friends enter the house, where the several guests are welcomed with music, firearms being also discharged as an additional mark of distinction on the arrival of the clergyman or other dignitary. The bride receives her visitors in state. She is in full nuptial dress, which if she be wealthy is most magnificent; and though the coronet she wears may not equal in value and beauty that spoken of as belonging to the church, it is still a very showy affair. If in less affluent circumstances, however, she at times contents herself with a simple 'skull cap,' and her unpretending Sunday clothes. Her 'tire-woman,' as also her bridesmaid, are in attendance on her.

The walls of the apartment wherein the wedding is to

be celebrated are in great part hung with webs of white linen cloth, &c., and in the summer time, moreover, it is decorated with leaves and flowers. To the ceiling, again, and immediately above the spot where the bridal pair are to stand during the nuptial ceremony, is affixed a 'Pell,' or canopy, similar to that recently spoken of; and when the clergyman is about to read the appointed service, a nuptial cushion ornamented with flowers and ribands is brought into the room under a flourish of music by young girls, and placed beneath the canopy in question, on which the bride and bridegroom kneel whilst being made one.

This accomplished, and every one present having congratulated the happy couple, the company soon afterwards seat themselves at the banqueting table, where the guests are placed according to the degree of relationship they bear to the bride and bridegroom. But great delay often occurs before the weighty matter is properly arranged, particularly as one or other of them not unfrequently absents himself purposely from the room, and has to be sought for, and, when found, led by compulsion, as it were, to his appointed seat.

'The Swedish peasant,' we are told, 'from being accustomed to be slighted, becomes very *diffident*, and hence when the question of *precedence* arises it is often difficult to induce him to take the place to which from consanguinity to one or other of the newly-wedded couple he is justly entitled.'

In some instances the bride and bridegroom sit at separate tables, the former being supported by her bridesmaids; but in general they are placed together, and under the 'Pell.' Each dish, or course, of which there are

usually from four to seven, is brought into the apartment under a flourish of music. The 'Bride's Knights' wait on the guests at table, and it is their special privilege, though encroached on occasionally, to have their heads covered the whole time.

The host himself, to show that he is lord of the domain, moves about everywhere in his shirt-sleeves, and does not trouble himself personally with what is going forward, but delivers his orders to the marshal or chief deputy, who is usually selected from amongst his nearest relatives. This functionary, in addition to his other accomplishments, must be so determined a toper as to be able, if needful, to put the rest of the company under the table; and he ought, besides, to be possessed of eloquence sufficient to make a telling speech on occasion.

Another of mine host's deputies is the tapster (commonly one of his own cotters), whose duty lies in constantly replenishing the glasses of the guests with ale out of a huge and highly carved wooden flagon, containing several gallons, and provided with a long spout, somewhat like unto that of a teapot. But it must not be supposed that ale is the only liquor provided on the joyous occasion; for independently of '*Finkel*,' the common brandy of the country, distilled from potatoes, and the nectar of the peasantry, cognac, and wines, are not unfrequently placed on the table.

One peculiarity observable at the wedding banquet is that a second plate is placed near to that of the bride, whereon she deposits a small portion of each of the viands of which she partakes, which plate is afterwards sent to some pensioner of the family.

This custom, which is common at every wedding, is of very ancient origin. In the dark days of Heathenism the delicacies in question were collected as an 'offering' to certain elves, called '*Tomtar*,' and were placed under the charmed tree of the homestead, or on the barn floor, which they were supposed to visit nightly.

These elves, of whom and of the charmed tree more hereafter, are, if well treated, believed to be well inclined to people; but others of the elves, together with the giants and dwarfs, &c., are looked on as inimical to mankind, and come under the general name of '*Troll*,' or evil spirits. Ingeborg, a famous wise-woman, who flourished in Sweden about the middle of the last century, entertained somewhat singular notions regarding these worthies. 'All nature,' said she, 'is peopled by supernatural beings, and has been so ever since Lucifer and his followers were cast down from Heaven, when the darkness was so profound that the evil spirits were only able to recognize each other by their groans and sighs. Lucifer himself, together with the more wicked of his crew, were transformed into "Troll," and all were condemned to dwell where they alighted.'

Owing to the number of dishes, and to the peasants eating slowly on these and similar occasions, coupled with the frequent breaks that occur in doing justice to the numerous toasts proposed, the chief of which is '*Dannemans Skål*,'* meaning the health and prosperity of the

* This is a very ancient custom. The term 'Danneman' implies a '*Bonde*,' or peasant, perfect in every way, in so far at least as honesty of purpose and uprightness of conduct can make a man so. The term comes from the old Gothic word '*Danne*,' which means perfection, whether for good or evil. Of a bad man, for instance, one says—'*Han är fördanner*,' that

newly-wedded couple, the repast usually lasts a long time, often, indeed, for three or four hours; in which while 'ample proof is given of the strength and capacity of northern stomachs.'

The banquet over, the company amuse themselves as best they may; the old people with their pipes, and 'spinning yarns,' whilst the young indulge in games of chance, guessing riddles, music, and the dance.

The custom of 'dancing the coronet off the head of the bride' is common in some places. With her eyes bandaged, and whilst the maidens present are dancing a ring-dance around her, the bride takes the crown from off her own head, and places it, haphazard, on that of one or other of the damsels; and she on whom the honour has been bestowed 'is believed to be the first to obtain a husband.' This girl, in her turn, places it on the head of a second, and so on with the whole of the party. The bride then is lifted on a chair, above the heads of her companions, and amidst tremendous cheering she drinks a toast, the implication of which is, 'a hope that all maidens may soon change their condition.' Thereafter she gives 'health to all wives in prospective.' The matrons now put forth their pretensions to the bride, who is detained by the maidens as long as possible; but they at length release her, and the dance is resumed.

The bridegroom goes through a somewhat similar ceremony as the bride. The bachelors form a ring about him, and he, in turn, dances with them all. He is then hoisted on to the shoulders of one or other of his comrades,

is, he is in the highest degree wicked; of a wise man, '*Han är fördanner*,' or he knows everything.

and from this commanding position bids adieu to the unmarried. The Benedicts now advance, and will take forcible possession of him, whereon a skirmish ensues between them and the bachelors, which at times proves so hot as to be not a little detrimental to both his clothes and person.

The festivities over for the day, or rather night, the happy couple retire to the bridal chamber; soon after which the guests, singing the while in chorus, and accompanied by the musicians, enter the room. Both the bride and bridegroom receive the company whilst sitting up in bed, and treat every one, the bride presenting each female with a glass of wine, and the bridegroom each man with one of brandy.

Formerly it was the custom to place the bridal couch in the middle of the apartment, and on a platform so elevated as to require five steps to reach it. The bride, still robed, was laid on the bed by her guardian; the bride-maids and men—the former bearing in their hands lighted wax tapers, and the latter torches composed of some dry and resinous wood—stood around the couch; and when the bridegroom made his appearance he, at a single bound, and amid the jeers and laughter of the company, placed himself by the side of the bride. The bride-maids, with their lighted tapers, and the bridegroom's men, with their flambeaux, then slowly retired in pairs from the room, singing in chorus a couplet which, freely translated, reads thus:

> 'Blow out the lights;
> Take the bride in thy arms.'

In former times, moreover, two of the bride-men not

p. 29.

THE SYSKON SÄNG, OR BROTHER AND-SISTER BED.

only bore each a costly cushion to the church (as at times, indeed, is the case at the present day), on which the bride and bridegroom knelt whilst the marriage ceremony was being performed, but the like also in the evening to the front of the nuptial couch, 'on which, when every one had retired from the apartment, and all was quiet in the house, the happy couple bent the knee in prayer.'

In some instances the newly-wedded pair are left entirely to themselves in the 'Bröllops-huset' for the night, the guests taking up their quarters with the neighbours, who, both from duty and inclination, show them every kindness and attention in their power.

When, however, the party is large, and accommodation for every one (even should they 'bundle' two or three together) is not procurable in the vicinity, the general company have recourse to a so-called '*Syskon säng*,' literally a brother and sister bed, that is, one consisting of clean and long rye-straw, which is strewed over the floor of the apartment, and, if in the winter time, facing the fire-place, whereon both sexes—clad, of course, in their daily habiliments—repose indiscriminately; and this, moreover, without the most remote idea of indelicacy being attached to the custom. Many and many a time, indeed, during my weary wanderings in the northern forests, when several of us, total strangers to each other, have taken shelter under a friendly roof, where proper accommodation was wanting, have we thus herded, or, as some might be inclined to say, 'pigged' together.

In parts of the province, and it is looked on as a very ancient custom, the bride, on the day after the nuptials, purposely absents herself from the house. The bride-

groom complains to the assembled guests that she has been stolen from him, and urges them to accompany him in pursuit. The pretended search takes place accordingly; and when the fair one is found she is forthwith clad in her bridal dress, of which she had previously divested herself, and is escorted home again with great parade and ceremony. This is her installation as mistress of the house, on the strength of which she, with her own fair hands, treats every one to bread and brandy. On this occasion, she receives in a plate the customary bridal presents contributed by the company.

At other times, the bridegroom and bride, together with the 'tire-woman' and the marshall, station themselves near a table whereon is placed a dish containing a large and ornamented bridal-cake of bread of a superior quality. The guests now advance singly up to the table, and deposit their several gifts on the top of the cake; and after that the donations have been counted, and the amount proclaimed aloud, they are placed under it. Every one gives something, but the young bachelors the most, each being expected to contribute from 3 to 10 rix dollars. The new-married couple then shake hands with the donors, and treat them to wine and toddy.

The wedding festivities usually last three days; but amongst the more wealthy of the peasantry not unfrequently for five or six, the company in the while diverting themselves in various ways; but for the most part it would seem as if the pleasures of the table formed the chief source of their enjoyment. In parts of the province it is customary, when the invitations to the wedding are issued, to state the number of days the proceedings are likely to

last; whereby the guests are able to regulate the 'Förning' that each contributes to the general stock; but in others no particular time is specified; and the only intimation the visitors receive that their 'room would be more acceptable than their company' is the very delicate, but never misunderstood one, of the hostess appearing with a large dish of highly spiced rice-pudding; and when this has been discussed, amid a profusion of thanks and great cheering, every one makes his bow and departs.

In some places, however, the wedding-party, prior to its breaking up, ascend an eminence near to the house, when, with shouts and hurrahs, they enjoy themselves to hearts' content with '*Flipp*,' a strong and inebriating liquor composed of brandy, ale, treacle, eggs, all-spice, pepper, &c. At times, moreover, a stone is erected on the spot, in commemoration of the joyful event.

But the 'Bröllop' is not yet fairly over, for the young couple, on taking possession of their new residence, are themselves expected to entertain all those who had been guests at the 'Bröllops-huset' during the marriage festivities.

CHAPTER III.

WEDDING CUSTOMS IN WAREND, WANGA, DELSBY, WESTBO.

THE MAY-POLE.—PRIVILEGES OF THE WAREND WOMEN.—MODES OF DRESSING THE HAIR IN WANGA.—THE STOMACHER.—IMMORAL CUSTOMS IN DELSBY. — PECULIAR CUSTOMS AT DELSBY AND WESTBO.

In the 'Härad' of Wärend (Småland) the 'Bröllop,' as seen above, is celebrated with much pomp and display.

After betrothment has taken place, the bridegroom presents the bride with a psalm-book, a chain and belt of silver, a spoon of the same metal, with a crown and leaves chased on the handle, a pair of high-heeled shoes, together with various other articles; and with these, the bridal gifts, she must show herself in church a week previously to the nuptials.

On the morning preceding their solemnization the clergyman's lady, who officiates as her tire-woman, repairs to the residence of the bride, where she is received by the latter and her relations with a flourish of music and other demonstrations of welcome; and afterwards she adorns the person of her *protégé* with the gayest and most becoming apparel that is procurable.

The following morning (Sunday) the clergyman himself calls on the bridegroom, when together, and accompanied

by the kinsfolk and friends of the latter, they set off on horseback for the abode of the bride. On the way the cavalcade is joined by from 15 to 20 youths, who have volunteered their services for the occasion. These men, who are equipped with red riding-whips, braided gloves, red cravats and bracelets, are all mounted on fleet steeds, and, to show their contempt of danger, leap them over stone walls, logs, and ditches, that lie by the wayside.

On the near approach of the *cortège*, the bride, in accordance with immemorial usage, not only gets up a good cry, but manages, unperceived by the bridegroom, to obtain a peep of him through her wedding-ring; 'it being believed that if, on the morning of her nuptials, she sees her intended before he sees her, he will prove a good and kind husband.'

When the cavalcade arrives at the 'Bröllop-house,' they are received with all due honour. After dismounting, the clergyman, accompanied by the band, commences the psalm, 'Holy Trinity, be our aid,' in which the crowd join with powerful voice; and, whilst thus singing, the party enter the dwelling. Here they are welcomed by a speech from mine host or his representative; at the conclusion of which the psalm beginning, 'Come, Holy Ghost, O dearest Lord,' is sung by the whole company.

Afterwards they sit down to a plentiful repast; and good things are not wanting, a cow and several goats having been previously slaughtered, and an ample supply of ale and brandy provided for the happy occasion.

The meal finished, the wedding company, all of whom are on horseback, set out for church. In the first instance they ride three several times round the so-called '*Maj*

*Stäng,'** commonly translated May-pole (of which more hereafter), that is raised in the middle of the little enclosure in front of the house, and afterwards continue on their way to the sacred edifice.

The oldest of the men head the procession. Next come the band, with hautboys, violins, &c. Then the bride and her tire-woman, who is generally the clergyman's wife, together with a number of selected Amazons; and, lastly, the general company. To guard against the heavy coronet worn by the bride—at times weighing as much as two pounds—from falling off her head, the *cortège* must necessarily move at a very slow pace, the tedium of which is, however, the less felt, as the musicians during the whole time are constantly playing some light air or other.

Arrived at the church, the nuptial procession makes more than one circuit of the so-called bride's stone, probably the Freya stone mentioned in the 'Sagas;' and when the bells commence pealing, headed by the clergyman and the bridegroom, it slowly moves to the sound of music up the middle aisle of the sacred edifice.

The marriage ceremony over, the bride steps out on

* This term has given rise to much controversy amongst the learned. Some imagine that the summer festival of the ancient northmen—in the south of Sweden, at least—was really held in the month of May, when they decorated a pole (hence 'Maj Stång,' or May-pole), and danced around it; and that though this festival afterwards merged into that in honour of St John the Baptist (24th June), the 'Maj Stång' still retains its olden appellation. Others, however, are of opinion that the term '*Maj*,' or '*Mayas*,' merely implies green boughs, leaves, &c., in which sense, as will by-and-by be shown, it is frequently used in Sweden and, as I believe, in parts of Germany; as also in the Swedish translation of the Bible; and to their notion, therefore, which I myself take to be the right one, the 'Maj Stång' has no reference to any particular season of the year, but simply means a pole ornamented with leaves, flowers, &c.

p. 34.

WEDDING PROCESSION IN WÄREND.

to the green sward in the churchyard, and distributes alms, as also viands that she has brought from home for the purpose, to the poor and necessitous, after which the wedding-party return home.

Until within a very recent period, it should be remarked, the Wärend women alone enjoyed the peculiar privilege of sharing *equally* with the men the patrimony of their parents, whereas elsewhere in Sweden daughters were only entitled to the *half* of what fell to the lot of the sons. When, however, the question was mooted at a recent Diet whether the Wärend women should be made subject to the general law of inheritance, or that the existing law as regarded them should become that of the kingdom at large, justice prevailed, and the latter proposition was adopted. At the present day, therefore, boys and girls throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom share and share alike.

The learned are much in the dark as to the period when the Wärend women were exempted from the general law of inheritance. The old Småland chronicles would make it out to have been in the 2493rd year after the creation; but other authorities, and with some reason, assign the 9th or 10th century.

Many speculations are also hazarded as to the cause of the privilege in question being granted to the women of this 'Härad;' some say it was in consequence of their heroic conduct in having fought by the side of their husbands and brothers, when repelling an attack of the Danes, but others, that they themselves, by a *ruse*, overcame the enemy. The most generally received legend runs thus:

'The Amazons were headed by a heroine named

Blenda, who seeing the impossibility of overcoming the foe in open fight, proposed to the Danish warriors that she herself, and her companions, should become their wives. The king's choice fell on Blenda, and his men selected brides for themselves. Each bride then regaled her bridegroom until he became intoxicated, and fell asleep on her lap. Blenda now waved her kerchief, a signal that the hour of retribution was come, when each fair one murdered her husband, and the country was saved.'

In the parish of *Wänga* (Eastern Gotland), the marriage usually takes place on a Sunday. On the day preceding its solemnization, the bride, together with her own relations and those of her betrothed, assemble at the house of the bridegroom's father, where they partake of a banquet prepared for the occasion. This over, the bride, escorted by the clergyman's lady, who acts as her tire-woman, proceeds to the parsonage, where, during the night, she is fitly clad for her approaching nuptials.

The rest of the company remain stationary until the following morning, when, after a hearty breakfast, and that a suitable discourse for the occasion has been held by the clergyman, they also all set forth for the residence of the latter. Prior to departing, however, each man of the escort is supplied with a ring of wheaten bread, and a flask of brandy, or other liquor, wherewith to treat friends and acquaintance they may meet on the way.

The cortège on its arrival at the parsonage is ushered into the hall, and introduced to the bride, who in full nuptial dress, and attended by her numerous bridemaids, exhibits herself to the admiring eyes of the spectators. Her long hair, with the exception of a portion wound

around a so-called '*Valk*,'—a kind of 'frisette,' I believe, such as is worn by the Dalecarlian women,—hangs loosely over her neck and shoulders, a wreath of tinsel, or the like, encircles her brow, and on her head is the church coronet, spoken of in the last chapter. Her 'Bröst Lapp'—literally bosom lappets, a kind of stomacher, I believe, which is ornamented with pearls—reaches down to the waist; but in other respects she is attired as usual, though the more magnificently the better.

Less than thirty years ago another custom existed. The betrothed woman wore, on those days on which the banns were published, a very peculiar dress, consisting of a black jacket, a red 'wadmal' gown, both made of home-spun wool, red woollen stockings, and '*Swedish shoes*,' such as are of a peculiar make, with buckles. The hair, which was combed upwards and bound together with parti-coloured ribands, lay in a ring about the crown of the head. The dress in question betokened innocence; and should a girl have previously made a mistake, she was obliged to content herself with a simple skull-cap, divested of all ornament.

The dress of the bridegroom differs but little from that usually worn in the district. Around his white neck-tie is a broad green riband, and a similar one encircles his hat. The blue cloak of home-made wool that he wears must not be taken off for a moment, even during the marriage ceremony.

When the church bells peal to collect the congregation the wedding party set out for the sacred edifice. The men are all on horseback, and ride three abreast. The bridegroom—attended by two Court Knights, as they are

here called, one of them a relation of his own, and the other of the bride—heads the procession. The women, who are all in carriages of one kind or another, come next; that in which the bride is seated being the first in order; then the bridemaids, who, at a great 'Crown-Bröllop,' may be 30 or 40 in number; and lastly, the remainder of the females.

The company having alighted, the procession enters the church in much the same order, the musicians in the while playing the 'Bride's March,' a favourite tune in that part of the country. During the performance of the marriage ceremony, a 'Pell' is held over the happy couple, and at its conclusion they return to the pew, which is decorated with flowers, &c., that is set apart for their special accommodation, where they remain until the conclusion of the service.

The bridegroom then leads the bride out of the church to her vehicle, when the company set off for home. The *cortège* is headed by the musicians, who are followed by the 'bride's knights;' but the latter, after proceeding a short distance, gallop off in advance to the 'Bröllop-house,' to announce the near approach of the nuptial party. Here these men are received with the firing of guns, and other demonstrations of joy; and after that each has been hurriedly supplied by the cook with two wonderfully large rings of wheaten bread, and an ample supply of brandy, or the like, they haste back to their friends, whom they treat with the good things. This duty performed, they wheel about their steeds, and return to the 'Bröllop-house,' so that they may be in readiness to receive the company on their arrival.

Soon after this has taken place, dinner is served, the clerk of the parish saying 'grace.' After the repast is over, the clergyman himself leads the bride to the bench at the gable end of the house, which is that of honour. On a little table placed near to it, stands a large silver goblet filled with ale, and a basket containing 'goran,' a kind of cake, when a collection is made for the newly-wedded couple and for the poor. The clergyman notes down each one's donation, and when the subscription is completed, he proclaims aloud the names of the several donors, and the amount of their gifts. This ceremony concluded, the bridegroom treats the male guests to ale, and the bride the female guests to 'Rån,' also a sort of cake.

The musicians now strike up a dance. The clergyman and the bride, together with the bridegroom and the 'tire-woman,' dance first; then the bridegroom dances with each of the females present, and the bride with each of the men. Subsequently, the coronet is danced from off the head of the bride, in the manner mentioned in the last chapter, and after that she herself and the bridegroom have been 'chaired,' so to say, they take leave of their unmarried friends.

The bride is then led by her 'tire-woman' into an adjoining apartment, where she is divested of her nuptial dress, and assumes the habiliments of a matron, and in this she returns to the company, attended by her bridemaids, who form a ring, and, with lighted flambeaus in their hands, dance around her.

On the following morning, the 'young father' (dressed in a short jacket) and the 'young mother'—so the newly-

married couple are now designated—pay visits to the respective guests, and treat them to the best the larder and cellar afford.

The two or three succeeding days are devoted to amusements of various kinds; but on Thursday, or at the latest, Friday, a compound of ale and milk is placed on the table, a hint to the company that the Bröllop festivities are ended. The mistress of the house now distributes amongst the guests what remains of the 'Förning' they brought with them; and as each family departs guns are discharged, and the musicians play a merry tune.

But the young spruce-pines that are raised on either side of the doorway, and at the entrance-gate to the homestead, in honour of the bride, are allowed to remain until such time as the young mother has had a little one.

Of the manner in which matrimonial affairs with the peasantry are managed in the parish of Delsbo (Helsingland), Lenæus, then its incumbent, but afterwards Archbishop of Upsala, gives us a graphic, though somewhat plain-spoken, account; one, moreover, that tells but little in favour of the morals of his flock. Writing towards the end of the last century, he says:—

'Courtship commences not until after too great intimacy has taken place between the parties. When a youth, in company with others, has, in various places and for a length of time, paid visits on the nights of Sundays and other holidays, to the unmarried girls in their beds,* he begins, at length, to confine his attentions to some one of

* Elsewhere Lenæus informs us that the custom in question, as regards the girls rather, commences when they have entered on their teens, namely, when they are 13, 14, 15 years of age, and even before.

them in particular, and gives her to understand that he desires to marry her; on which she, if he is to her liking, advises him to make his wishes known to her relations.

'When, therefore, he is fully resolved on proceeding with the affair, he sets out, generally alone, for the house of the girl's parents, taking with him a flask of brandy and a few small wheaten cakes; and on his arrival there, he treats his intended father-in-law, as also his sweetheart, to the good things he has brought with him. During the drinking bout that follows he opens his mind fully and freely, and negotiates to the best of his abilities. But should the suitor have come empty-handed to the house, and has not brandy wherewith — in the event of his wishes being opposed—to mollify their hearts, he experiences the truth of Euripides' words, which have been translated,—

> "Full sure the fire of love will soon be quench'd or dead,
> Unless you quicken it with wine and wheaten bread."

'Should the lover, however, receive the wished-for "*Ja*," or "Yes," he at once "*fäster*," or betroths himself to the fair one with a ring and other gifts; and from that time forward he has not only full permission to share her bed as often as he pleases, but he gains this further point, that she will not afterwards permit any one else to visit her.

'When matters have gone on thus for some time, the girl, to make the youth more fully appreciate the value of her favours, pretends to put an end to the engagement between them, and proposes to return all the presents he has made her. Should he, however, refuse to receive them back, and says the agreement shall hold good, she never,

from that time forward to her marriage day, ventures to refuse him the like privileges he would be entitled to had the church sanctioned their union. Hence, should any one express doubts as to such and such a youth and girl being betrothed, another replies, "Of that there can be no doubt, because they have already began to cohabit;" and such persons who, on honour and faith, are thus intimate, are here called "*Govän's folk*," or "good friends' people."

'The "Bröllop" is commonly celebrated at a house in the hamlet where the young couple are in future to reside. The host himself finds the liquor; but when the relatives and friends of the parties about to be united are bidden to the wedding, it is with the understanding that, in proportion to their numbers, they should bring "Förning" with them, with the exception, however, of one, or at the utmost two, of the most intimate friends of the bridegroom, whom he has the privilege of inviting without this obligation being imposed. And if any unbidden person presents himself at the "Bröllop-house," he is at once shown to the door, and should he hesitate to depart, the chances are he will receive a good thrashing into the bargain.

'On the Maiden's Evening, or that preceding the nuptials, the "Förning" contributed by the guests is handed over to two respectable matrons, called "*Matstill Gummor*," literally, old women who satisfy the hunger, whose duty it is to superintend the provisioning of the company during the festivities; and however long these may last, the guests are therefore relieved from all anxiety on that account; and without troubling himself as to whether this or that particular viand was part of his own contribution, each one eats with an appetite whatever is set before him.'

Both in going to and returning from church, the bride and bridegroom, as also the whole of the nuptial company, are always mounted; and that, moreover, on the best horses in the parish. These are willingly lent by their owners for the purpose, although they neither expect nor receive other reward than a little 'treat' at the 'Bröllop-house,' when, on the return of the cavalcade from the sacred edifice, they go there to take them home. That the nuptial company thus ride on horseback to the church, and that even during the most inclement weather, is occasioned by their not having other vehicles than simple and clumsily-made '*fälesläder*,' or such as are used for every-day purposes.

Everywhere, both in Sweden and abroad, the cavalier has from time immemorial always mounted and dismounted from his horse on the *left side;* but here, as also in several other parts of the province, one notices that though the women adopt the usual custom, the men, from thinking it would be impolite were they to follow the example of the other sex, always dismount on the *right side.*

The bride, provided she has not been previously married, is adorned with a silver-gilt coronet, of about forty ounces in weight; as also with other finery; but the bridegroom wears his own black clothes, with a white linen kerchief about his neck. Formerly it was customary for him on the wedding day to appear in church with ornamented lappets and a long clerical cloak, but since 1760 this custom has been laid aside.

The bride, on leaving the church, repairs to the parsonage house, where she treats with bread and brandy all

those who, though not invited to partake of the wedding festivities, have nevertheless officiated as her bridemaids when entering or leaving the church: and when this bridemaid entertainment, as it is called, is over, the newly-married couple proceed to the 'Bröllop-house.'

At the banquet on the wedding day, money for the infirmary is subscribed, and after the repast is concluded, a collection is made for the bride, to which not only the bridegroom and the guests, but absent friends—their gifts being called '*Sändpengar*,' or sent money—are contributors. The money for the poor is not however subscribed for by the young couple and the general company, until the following day, when the names of the donors, and the amount of their gifts, are proclaimed aloud.

A dance succeeds the banquet. When the bridemaids and the other girls have danced awhile, they take off their shoes and stockings, and this both during winter as summer; but they feel the cold the less from being but little in the habit of wearing either the one or the other in the house the whole year round. This custom of thus going bare-footed does not arise from the fear of wearing out their stockings and shoes, but because the latter are so misshapen and needlessly large as to chafe their feet; and it is therefore owing to bungling shoemakers that they are unable to benefit by the counsel of Horace:

> Cui non conveniet sua res, ut calceus olim,
> Si pede major erit, subvertet, si minor uret.
> Horat. 1 Epist. x. 42.

> 'I warn you, my good friend, don't wear too large a shoe,
> For if you trip or slip, 'twill be the worse for you.'

When the musicians have ended a '*låt*,' literally, a noise or sound, as a tune is here called, and are thinking

of another, or are tuning their instruments, the several pairs do not seat themselves, as is usually the case, but constantly and slowly glide, as it were, around the room; so that when a new tune is struck up, they are all immediately in rapid motion again, and no time is therefore lost in useless ceremony, or in paying unmeaning compliments.

The long hair of the maidens, whilst they are dancing, is allowed to fall loose and unconfined over their necks and shoulders; and when one sees their dishevelled tresses streaming around them, it is easy to imagine in what manner it went at the solemn festival of Anna Perenna, with the Romans, of which Ovid thus speaks,—

> Et ducunt posito duras cratere choreas,
> Cultaque diffusis saltat amica comis.
> Ovid, Fast. III. 537.

> 'For in the merry ring-dance the wine cup's thrown aside,
> And deftly do they foot it with tresses flowing wide.'

The verse might be more literally, though less elegantly put thus—

> 'The wine cup laid aside,
> The maidens fain advance,
> With tresses flowing wide,
> In sprightly artless dance.'

So long as liquor is to be found at the 'Bröllop-house,' no one thinks of taking his departure; but this may last until the third, fourth, fifth, or even the seventh day, as was the case at Simon's wedding. When, however, the spigot in the remaining ale barrel will no longer run, and no more brandy remains, the sentiment of Horace is brought to remembrance:—

> 'The wedding guests disperse, from the feast they troop *en masse*,
> When not a drop remains, in barrel, stoup, or glass.'

But that no one, who on his arrival did himself honour by contributing a liberal 'Förning,' should go empty-handed away, the 'mattstill gummor' makes up for him a little kit of the relics of the feast, consisting of meat, game, cheese, &c., as if to say ;—

> Non invisa feres pueris munuscula parvis.
> Horat. 1 Epist. vii. 17.
>
> 'Take home the small pittance, and do not say nay,
> It may be a treat for your children next day.'

On the first Sunday after the wedding, the young wife repairs to the church in the ancient and staid-looking dress of a young peasant-matron of the olden times : namely, a handsome *Kors Mössa*, a sort of a cap adorned with a cross, and over it a white and blue starched kerchief, and a black jacket and petticoat; and encircling her waist, a belt or girdle of silver, to the clasp of which is appended a spoon of the like metal, with a large knob, or button, at the end of its long handle. Thus attired, she is said to exhibit herself in state, and after the service is over, she, in the churchyard, thanks all those who, although neither present nor bidden to her nuptials, had, nevertheless, honoured her with bridal presents, in the shape of '*Sändpengar*,' or sent money at the wedding dinner.

'The first-born child is called the bride's child ; and in case several other infants are brought at the same time to the baptismal font, even though their parents may be more wealthy or of better standing in the world, the clergyman always gives it precedence to the rest.'

In the parish of Westbo (Smäland), says its former incumbent, M. Gasslander, who, as with Lenæus, just quoted, flourished near a century ago.

Betrothment usually takes place during Christmas, Easter, or Whitsuntide, or otherwise on Candlemas day. The suitor, who has previously received a favourable reply to his proposals, sets out, accompanied by relatives and friends,—as also, should his reputation be good, by the clergyman of the parish where he resides,—for the abode of his intended bride.

On arrival there, however, they neither take off their hats, sit down, nor partake of refreshments, until such time as the spokesman of the party has, in a short speech—no doubt after the example of Eliezer, Gen. xxiv. 33—made known their errand, when the young couple shake hands. Our Lord's prayer and the blessing are then read, in which while the kinsfolk and others present lay their hands on those of the now betrothed pair, and afterwards wish them joy.

This ceremony over, brandy is presented to the company. But before sitting down to the '*Friare gille*,' as the entertainment given on the occasion of a betrothal is called, and which not unfrequently lasts for several days, the youth makes the usual bridal presents to the girl and her relations. The like duty is incumbent on the girl as regards her lover and his kinsfolk, but she defers it to a future day agreed on between them.

The presents on both sides consist chiefly of articles of wearing apparel, but they are too numerous to particularize. The gifts which the youth receives from the girl he forthwith makes use of, but she, on the contrary, reserves those he has made her for a quarter of a year or more, when she wears them on special occasions, such as at 'Gästabud,' when officiating as sponsor to a friend's child, or as a

bridemaid, or when she herself is about to take the sacrament.

When thus betrothed, and presents have been exchanged, it is not considered at all incorrect for them to share one and the same bed, whether it be at their own homes, or at the houses of relatives and friends. 'Which vicious custom,' says Gasslander, 'is so deeply rooted, that it cannot readily be abolished.'

During the autumn preceding the wedding the girl, accompanied by an intelligent matron, who acts on her behalf, makes the round of all the houses in her own parish, as also of those where she is known in the adjoining parishes, and petitions, generally with success, for small quantities of hemp, flax, wool, &c., as a provision wherewith to commence housekeeping.

About Christmas the youth starts off on a like errand, and solicits seed-corn, which he commonly obtains in the shape of oats, the kind of grain most grown in these parts.

The woman, when thus occupied, is called the 'Flax-beggar, and the man the 'Oat-beggar.' Such persons, however, as have thus laid their neighbours under contribution, are expected, in return, to assist others similarly circumstanced to themselves; but those, on the contrary, who, whether from disinclination or from possessing sufficient means of their own, have never resorted to this indelicate, though courteous, way of asking charity, are considered as exempt from the claim. Excepting in the more western parts of the 'Härad,' however, the custom in question is now greatly on the decline.

In preference, the wedding takes place from towards the end of spring to midsummer; but, should circum-

stances occur—such, for instance, as that the young couple are unexpectedly obliged to enter upon a farm, or that the bride finds herself *enceinte*—as to render an immediate union desirable, the nuptials are solemnized at all seasons of the year.

On the evening preceding the wedding, the clergyman, the musicians, and the relations and friends of the bridegroom assemble at the house of the latter, and are hospitably entertained, and here, after amusing themselves with music and dancing, they pass the night.

But the bride, with her 'tire-woman,' and her own kinsfolk, remain at the 'Bröllop-house,' where great preparations have been made for the coming festivities. The ceiling and walls of the apartment wherein these are to take place, as also the bride's own chamber, are hung or covered all over with drapery of one kind and another; and if it be in the summer-time, they are, besides, tastefully decorated with the green leaves of the Lily of the Valley, made up into love-knots. Young spruce pines are, moreover, raised in front of the house, and at the boundary gate of the property, in honour of the bride.

Neither has the larder been forgotten, the guests having contributed an ample 'Förning,' consisting of large cakes of bread, butter-cheeses, dried and smoked meats, &c.

Breakfast over on the following morning at the home of the bridegroom, the clergyman holds an appropriate discourse to the assembled guests, and afterwards he and the bridegroom, accompanied by the musicians and a large retinue, set off on horseback for the abode of the bride.

The relations and friends of the bridegroom are provided with large metal spurs, as also cloaks, which are

strapped to the back of the saddle; and, if it be in the summer-time, flowers are not wanting in their hats and bosoms. Their steeds are likewise very gaily caparisoned, and their manes and tails decorated with leaves, so that altogether the cavalcade has a most imposing appearance; and, that it may not be hidden under a bushel, the musicians, who have no appointed place in the procession, keep constantly riding up on to hills and eminences, whence, with their hautboys and clarionets, they make known its whereabouts.

When the *cortège* has proceeded some distance, a pair or two of '*Förriddare*,' or those at the head of the procession, who are selected for their agility and vigour, gallop forward to the 'Bröllop-house' to inquire after the health of the bride, and if she is in readiness to receive them. On reaching her dwelling, these men, without dismounting, are treated to ale and brandy, of which having partaken, they wheel about their horses and ride back at speed to their friends. Usually they are accompanied by the bride's musicians, and such of the guests as have passed the night at her house, all of whom are mounted, whereby the strength of the cavalcade is materially increased.

The 'Förriddare' in question having delivered a courteous message from the bride, to the effect that she is well, and that all the company are welcome, another pair or two of these men start on a similar mission, and presently return again with a somewhat like reply, and so on with the rest of them until the *cortège* reaches the 'Bröllop-house.'

Here they are cordially received; and after that every one has been hospitably entertained, the clergyman, who

accompanied the bridegroom, holds a bridal-discourse to the betrothed couple and the assembled company, which discourse is responded to in a similar strain by the clergyman of the parish wherein the bride resides.

This ceremony over, the wedding party set out for the church in the following order: 1st, the bride's knights, 'four or five of whom,' says Gasslander, 'some years ago, usually acted as cushion-bearers. Each of them carried a cushion under his arm from the 'Bröllop-house,' and, riding in advance of the *cortège* to the church, he deposited his burthen on the seat of or at the back of the pew set apart for the bridal pair, and when this duty was performed he returned with all speed to his friends; 2nd, the bridegroom, the clergyman, and such persons of condition as may be present. 3rd, the servants of the latter; 4th, the relations and friends of the bridegroom in pairs; 5th, the humbler kingsfolk of the bride; 6th, the bridemaids; 7th, the musicians; 8th, the bride, who is waited on by the Brud Dräng, a sort of page, and one of the bridegroom's most considerable relations; 9th, the tire-woman; and, lastly, the matrons who are of the nuptial company.

The bridegroom is always mounted on the handsomest and most gaily-caparisoned horse procurable, but the bride, on the contrary, must content herself with an inferior steed; it being the belief that if she be not a maid in every sense of the word, the animal she rides on her nuptial day will never afterwards be good for anything.

On the wedding party reaching the churchyard the bride must remain stationary for awhile, that she may be gazed on by the congregation, who have flocked from all parts to gratify their curiosity.

This show over, the procession enters the building, and excepting that the 'Förriddare' draw up in line on either side of the capacious porch in front of the church, for the *cortège* to pass between, in much the same order as when it left the 'Bröllop-house.'

During the performance of the marriage ceremony a certain number of the bridemaids, the others in the while standing in the choir, hold a highly-ornamental 'Pell' above the heads of the happy couple, and on its completion they all resume their former seats.

At the conclusion of the sermon the Psalm commencing, 'So beautifully shines the morning sun,' is sung, accompanied by the musicians on the hautboys, and subsequently a collection is made for church purposes.

The clergyman on descending from the pulpit is the first to contribute his mite; then the bridegroom and persons of condition; after them in regular succession the Förriddare, the relations and friends of the bridegroom, and the remainder of the male 'Bröllop guests,' and, lastly, as many others who, though not of the wedding party, may in this way be desirous of showing their respect for the bridegroom.

When the men have given their money, the bridemaids, in pairs, make their contributions; then the bride, who is accompanied by the individual (generally a person of condition) who led her to the altar; next the 'tire-woman,' followed by the matrons who took part in the procession, and lastly by all those who, though uninvited by the bride, thus come voluntarily forward to dignify her 'Heders Day,' or day of honour.

At the conclusion of the service, the nuptial party,

excepting that the 'Förriddare' are now at the head instead of in the rear of the procession, leave the church in much the same order as on entering it.

On reaching the churchyard, however, the bride has again, and for half an hour or more, to go through the like ordeal as before, the people never tiring of admiring her and her finery.

This exhibition ended, the *cortège* sets off on its return to the 'Bröllop-house.' All the gates it passes through must not only be decorated with green boughs, but left open, or otherwise the 'Förriddare' are privileged to throw them down.

The first business of mine host on his reaching home is to treat with bread and brandy the so-called horse-people, or those who had lent their steeds for the occasion and who were now come to take them back.

Certain ceremonies, too uninteresting to narrate, are then gone through; shortly after which the company sit down to the banquet, the 'tire-woman' by the side of the bride, and the clergyman between the latter and the bridegroom. During the repast many toasts are drank, and collections made, both for the young couple and charitable purposes. At its conclusion, as well as commencement, the clergyman says 'grace,' and afterwards a psalm is sung.

Later in the day a dance takes place, which is kept up until a late hour. The crown is then, in the usual manner, 'danced from off the head of the bride,' and when both herself and the bridegroom have been 'chaired,' they bid adieu to such of their friends as are still in a state of single blessedness.

The 'tire-woman' then conducts the bride to her chamber, where she is divested of her nuptial dress, and assumes that of a matron, in which she shortly afterwards rejoins the company.

The following day, should the weather be propitious, dancing and other amusements are indulged in out-of-doors; and when the festivities, which usually last for four, five, or even six days, are ended, the young couple are escorted from the 'Bröllop-house' to their future residence, where, for one or two additional days, the company drink '*Hemkomst öl*,' literally, arrival at home ale, as the entertainment given on the occasion (answering probably to our 'house-warming'), is here called. For ale, indeed, the old Northmen would seem to have had a special liking; for not only banquets connected with the 'Bröllop' went, as we have seen, by that name, but many other of their festivals; and the designation then given them are still very generally retained by the Swedish peasantry.

CHAPTER IV.

WEDDING CUSTOMS IN OTHER LOCALITIES.

PECULIAR CUSTOMS IN HAFVERO, RACKEBY, KULLINGS AND GÄSENED, DANMARK, TORNÅ,—IN FLEDIE, FJELIE, AND LOMMA,—IN SÄBROO, RÖFSUNDS, SVEG, HEDESUNDÅ, WISSERUM.

In the parish of *Hafvero* (Meddelpad), on the third Sunday of the banns being published, the head of the bride—who herself, however, never makes her appearance in church—is adorned with flowers, and she is called '*Lilla Bruden*,' literally the Little Bride, though the term 'Lilla,' as here applied, is rather one of endearment.

On the nuptial day she is dressed by the clergyman's wife, who officiates as her tire-woman; and when the wedding company have returned from church, and have dined, presents are made to the newly-married couple. These consist of cattle, furniture, and money; but the latter seldom amount to more than about five pounds sterling.

The happy pair subsequently dance a Polska with every one present; and after that the bridegroom has been 'chaired' by the men, and the bride by the women, they both take leave of the unmarried, and are received into

communion with the married. The bride then puts on the habiliments of a 'young mother,' and from this time forward takes the management of everything relating to the entertainment of the guests.

On the day succeeding the wedding there is a second collection called Giving to the Cradle, which sometimes nearly equals in amount the preceding one. Subsequently the bride distributes to her husband, parents, and brothers and sisters, body-linen, fronts, &c., and to each of the guests a pair of garters, gloves, or the like. These her presents are called '*Tole*,' meaning mittens and socks.

When the company are invited to the 'Bröllop,' it is for two, three, or four *nights*, never for *days*, as is usual: and its duration is regulated by the ability of the parties to hold longer or shorter festivities. Each matron takes 'Förning' with her, which is placed under the charge of the host and hostess. Brandy was formerly too much in request, but now it is looked on as discreditable to drink to excess.

In the parish of Rackeby, Källands 'Härad' (Westergotland), the peasantry still retain unaltered many of their ancient customs in regard to both courtship and marriage.

As in Bohus-Län, and elsewhere, the so-called 'Boneman,' or prayer-man, of whom mention was made in the second chapter, is often commissioned by the lover to prefer his suit to the fair one; and should his addresses be favourably received, the contracting parties and their near relations fix a day for the betrothal. The ceremony concludes, as usual, by taking each other by the hand, in confirmation of eternal fidelity; and from that day forward the youth is looked on as one of the girl's own family.

Gifts are now exchanged between the affianced parties. The lover presents his future bride with a psalm-book, a ring, &c., and receives from her, in return, a shirt of the finest materials, that has been made by herself, which he wears on the wedding-day, but never afterwards until in his coffin, when it serves as his winding-sheet; as also a 'front,' a neck-tie, a love-knot, composed of green ribands, which at his nuptials is pinned to his bosom immediately below the kerchief, and a pair of six-feet long garters, the chief colour of which is red.

The day being appointed for the wedding, and the guests bidden, they set about decorating the apartment wherein it is to be celebrated, for which purposes the services of all friends known to be possessed of taste are put in requisition. The walls are hung with drapery of one kind and another, and amongst the rest, with the most valuable of the bride's little property, such as shawls and woollen bed-coverings, that she herself has with much art and skill prepared. Then again, from four to six webs of white linen, of which the half are of the ordinary kind, and the other half a sort of net-work, whereon are represented birds, stars, &c., are stretched along the whole length of the ceiling, and from about the centre of the latter, and immediately above the spot where the bridal pair will stand during the marriage ceremony, is suspended a similar 'Pell' to that spoken of in the foregoing chapter.

On the wedding-day the bridegroom, the clergyman, the bride's knights, and the musicians, proceed on horseback to the 'Bröllop-house,' where they are received with music; and after that the young couple have been united

for better or worse, they all sit down to the banquet.

This over, the 'old man's table,' which is amply provided with pipes, tobacco, goblets of ale, &c., is placed against the wall, where those disinclined to more active amusements, enjoy themselves to their hearts' content.

Later in the evening, and after that the guests have in succession danced with the bridé, the '*Rackeby Polska*,' a favourite tune in these parts, is struck up.

In the 'Härads' of *Kullings and Gäsened* (Westergötland) the 'Bröllop' is celebrated with much pomp and state. The bride is usually attired by the wife of one of the clergy of the parish, who acts as her tire-woman, with all the finery that can be got together, as her own clothes she never puts on. But the bridegroom, on the contrary, wears his usual simple dress, with the addition of an outer coat or cloak.

All the men invited to the wedding assemble at the house of the bridegroom, who, accompanied by the clergyman and the musicians playing all the while some merry tune, ride from thence to the bride's abode to escort her to church.

On reaching the house, two of the party, carrying lighted flambeaux, precede the clergyman into the bride's chamber, when, kneeling before her, they place on her feet the 'bridal shoes,' wherein is placed silver coin,—boding, as said, the future riches of the young couple,—in which she is to dance at night.

On the way to the house of God, the bridegroom, the clergyman, and the other men of the company, all of whom are mounted, ride in advance of the bride, who, with her 'tire-woman' and four bridemaids, splendidly dressed, are

in carriages of some kind. When the procession has advanced some distance, two of the 'bride's knights'—generally her near relatives—gallop forward to the church, where they fall on their knees before the altar, and afterwards return with the like speed the way they came.

The marriage ceremony completed, and divine service over, the nuptial company set off on their return home. When they are well on the way, the bride-knights spoken of gallop forward to the 'Bröllop-house,' to announce the coming of the *cortège*, and after having been kindly entertained, hurry back to their friends with the host's compliments, and a message to the effect that all are welcome—with the stipulation, however, that should any one conduct himself otherwise than with propriety he shall, as a punishment, do some impossible thing—such as 'remove a mountain, drink a lake dry,' or the like!

On the bride reaching her house, and before she has crossed the threshold, her mother meets her, and privily puts a piece of sugar or a coffee bean in her mouth—to teach her economy, it is to be presumed—it being the popular belief that the first thing she partakes of after marriage she will have a distaste for ever after.

The walls and ceiling of the apartment in which the festivities consequent on the wedding take place, are decorated with webs of linen, table-cloths, &c., and if during summer, also with leaves and flowers.

The banquet usually lasts from four to six hours, and on the several dishes being placed on the table the musicians play a merry tune. During the repast collections are made for the clergyman, the newly-married couple, and the poor.

Afterwards dancing takes place. All who dance with the bride and bridegroom are expected to give them 'dance-money,' as a little provision wherewith to commence housekeeping; and when the bride unrobes for the night, the coins in her shoes fall to the maiden she selects to take them off her feet, which office is looked on as one of high distinction.

The festivities last three days, at the expiration of which time the young couple are escorted to their new home by their relations and friends.

In the parish of *Danmark* (Upland) marriages are partly solemnized after betrothment, and partly without that ceremony having been gone through.

When matters have been satisfactorily arranged between the lovers, they proceed to the nearest town and purchase and present each other with the usual betrothal gifts, consisting of a prayer-book, a ring, and divers articles of wearing apparel; and on the second or third Sunday on which the banns are published, the bride to be accepts of presents from her young friends.

The evening prior to the nuptials the bridegroom takes a parting cup with his unmarried friends and acquaintances, and bids them farewell. Equally great preparations for the coming festivities are made at his house, or at his father's, as at that of the bride

Early on the morning of the wedding-day the clergyman, and the relations and friends of the happy man, repair to his abode, from whence, after breakfasting, they set off on horseback for the house where the marriage ceremony is to be performed. If it be a wedding where the bride wears the 'church coronet,' which is less common of

late years, she (the bride) has previously gone to a house near the church, there to be attired in her nuptial dress. The larger the party that accompanies the bridegroom the greater the honour done him. On the way one hears the notes of the clarionet and the violin; and at every gate the *cortège* passes through small coins are, by the fortunate swain, distributed to the children.

So soon as the bride is aware of the approach of the bridegroom, she, by peeping under the window-blind, or through a chink in the door, manages to get a sight of him before he sees her, 'otherwise she will never forget the unlucky incident, and the union cannot but prove an unhappy one.'

The marriage duly solemnized, and every one having congratulated the young couple, the nuptial party, together with the clergyman and the musicians, proceed to the 'Bröllop-house,' usually that of the parents of the bride, where a sumptuous repast awaits them, and to which they shortly afterwards sit down. Owing, however, to the diffidence evinced by the peasantry, as mentioned in the second chapter, when the question of precedence at table is mooted, half an hour or more often elapses before all have found their proper seats.

Grace is said by the clergyman, who is seated at the right hand of the bride, prior to the commencement of the repast, during which the health of the bride and bridegroom is drank with acclamation, and for the most part in wine and punch. Afterwards a collection is made for the bride, which, together with the gifts of her parents, are handed over to the newly-married couple. The meal ends with a thanksgiving by the clergyman, and the singing of a psalm, in which every one joins.

Subsequently the musicians strike up a dance, which is opened by the clergyman and the bride, and is kept up with great spirit until the night is well advanced. In the customary manner the coronet is then danced from off the head of the bride; and after that both she herself and the bridegroom have been 'chaired,' they bid adieu to such of their friends as are still single and miserable.

The young couple now retire for a while to another apartment, where they divest themselves of their nuptial dresses, and put on those of staid married people; and thus attired, they soon afterwards return to the company. They are waited on by the bridemaids and men, bearing in their hands tapers and flambeaux, and who, in honour of the occasion, form a ring, and, whilst waving their lights to and fro with great adroitness, dance around the happy pair.

The 'young father' and 'young mother' now treat the company to 'the young wife's viands,' consisting of apples, confectionery, together with brandy sweetened with treacle. The so-called young father's and mother's dance then commences, and is kept up for some time; and when this is over, the guests sit down to the evening meal.

At six in the morning all is quiet in the 'Bröllop-house,' the young couple having retired to the nuptial chamber, the married people to a separate apartment, or to the shelter of some neighbouring roof, whilst the unmarried of both sexes are reposing in happy confusion in a so-called 'Syskon-säng,' described and depicted in the second chapter.

About noon on the following day all is again life and motion. The newly-wedded pair are the first to rise, and

with their own hands serve coffee to the guests whilst still in bed. The company once more assembled, dancing commences anew, and is indulged in until four or five in the afternoon, when they seat themselves at table to partake of bread dipped in dripping.

During the meal two wonderful masks—a man and a woman—enter the room, and each presents a ludicrously-decorated hand-purse, provided with a long handle, to the guests, all of whom are expected to contribute a trifle, which collection goes to the dish-washer, or scullion. But the comic pair play other amusing tricks; and the more they succeed in making people laugh, the better they perform their parts, and the greater their guerdon.

The repast ended, the dance is renewed, and is kept up with animation for hours and hours.

On the third day some of the guests return home. But the 'Bröllop' is not yet over, for the 'young mother' has still to entertain all the maidens who, when the banns were published, made her presents, but were not invited to the wedding, and for their sakes, therefore, another day is set apart for an entertainment and a dance.

In some of the parishes in the 'Härad' of *Tornă* (Scania) proposals of marriage are made by the suitor through the parents of the girl; and should they have no objection to urge, more especially as regards property, the affair is at once settled. Even if the fair one dislike the man, and has a fancy for another, remonstrances on her part are useless; for, should not the persuasions of relations avail, recourse is had to compulsion. It for the most part happens, indeed, that first cousins intermarry, that the property may not go out of the family.

The feast called '*Ja-öl,*' or 'yes-ale,' consequent on the acceptance of the lover's proposals, which was formerly celebrated with much state and display, now takes place in all quietness at the house of the girl's parents, only the youth and two or three of his nearest kinsfolk being present. On this occasion he presents his intended with the so-called '*Ja-gåfva,*' literally, 'yes-gift,' consisting of a large silver goblet of three to four pounds in value, wherein is deposited several large silver coins, a couple of silver spoons, all tied up in a cotton wrapper, which must not be opened until the following morning.

On the wedding day the bride fastens to the bosom of her black-cloth jacket four large circular silver gilt plates, called bride buckles, to which are attached pendant leaves of the like metal, and in the centre of these is hooked a fifth, but square silver plate, also having leaves hanging to it, called '*Särkasöl,*' that is, shirt, or sash, silver-ornaments.

In the parishes of *Fledie, Fjelie,* and *Lomma*—also in the 'Härad' of Tornă—the ancient fashions and customs of the 'Bröllop,' in so far at least as the festivities (usually lasting three or four days) consequent thereon are concerned, are for the most part retained.

At the banquet on the day of the nuptials, nothing is eaten excepting what the larder of the 'Bröllop-house' affords; but on the subsequent days the 'Förning' furnished by the guests is placed on the table, and that in the order in which the matrons, the contributors, stand in regard to relationship to the bride and bridegroom. It consists of many large cakes, of both sweet and sour rye-bread, as also of such as are made of wheaten flour, and of several kinds of meat, of which a couple of roast pigs commonly form a

part, that are piled, one on another, on an immense dish,—above this store of good things, again, is a wreath of cakes strung together; as also butter, sugar-cakes, almonds, &c. Another equally capacious dish contains rice pudding, and a third a large sugar cake.

The 'Förning' in question is dealt out to the company by one of the most considerable persons present; and even the porridge must be divided with the knife, and laid on plates, which are handed round to the guests in succession. However many kinds of viands there may be, every one must help himself to a portion of each; and hence it happens that the guests' plate is piled up in like manner as the dishes containing the 'Förning.' The chief liquor consists of ale, which is handed about to the company in large silver tankards by men called '*Mun Skänker*,' literally, presenters to the mouth. Brandy is partaken of only in moderation, so that a single glass suffices for several. Should any one drink to excess, he is placed under the special charge of mine host, and everything in consequence is conducted with propriety. Towards the conclusion of the repast, and during a flourish of music, subscriptions are made for the musicians, &c.

A dance, as also pastimes of various kinds, succeed the dinner; and after the evening meal, which concludes with a prayer and a psalm, the spokesman invites the guests for the morrow.

The ceremony of '*Säng Ledning*' then takes place; that is, the clergyman takes the bride (and afterwards the bridegroom) by the hand, and whilst a psalm is being sung, leads her into the nuptial chamber, where he holds a discourse suitable to the occasion.

Subsequently, and when the happy couple have retired for the night, all the guests enter the apartment, and take leave, on which occasion the men make their gifts to the bride, the amount varying according to their circumstances.

On the second day, after dinner, the entertainment is at times divided, so to speak, into two; the newly-wedded couple taking the bridegroom's relations with them to their new dwelling, whilst the rest of the company remain at the 'Bröllop-house.'

On the concluding day of the festivities there is a breakfast, which lasts until the afternoon, when the guests depart, each matron taking home with her, as a *souvenir*, a small portion of the several kinds of provisions contributed by the company at large.

In the parish of *Säbro* (Ångermanland) the 'Bröllop' is most commonly celebrated during the autumn, the festivities lasting for two or more days.

Those who accompany the young couple to and from church are, for the most part, mounted. The bridegroom is attired in a clerical cloak. The bride is gaily dressed after the fashion of the district, and is attended on by many bridemaids, who are clad in red woollen jackets, white aprons, and kerchiefs; such of them as hold the 'Pell' over the bride and bridegroom when at the altar wear black.

Before proceeding to the church the clergyman delivers a nuptial discourse; and after the return of the company from thence, and that the ceremony of 'Säng Ledning,' recently described, has been gone through, two glasses are filled with wine, which are handed to the bride and

bridegroom, who each drink the half, when, exchanging glasses, they quaff the remainder. The whole company then drink the health of the newly-wedded couple, the clergyman on the occasion making some appropriate observations.

All then take their seats at the festive board. Five or six different kinds of viands, consisting of fish, soup, ham, cheese-cakes, pastry, &c., are served up. During the repast a collection is made for the young pair, and afterwards the names of the donors are duly proclaimed, and the amount of their several subscriptions—the sum total of which may be four to five pounds of our money—are duly proclaimed.

Subsequently there is a dance, which is kept up until three or four in the morning. The bride then lays aside her nuptial attire, as also her coronet, and puts on a black skull-cap, which from that time forward constitutes her usual head-dress.

In the parish of *Rüfsunds* (Jemtland) it was the custom at one time to spread a table in front of the 'Bröllop-house,' where the guests, on arrival, and before being allowed to enter the building, were treated to brandy, &c. This was called '*Till forgong*,' implying an anticipatory entertainment. If any stranger made his appearance, the youths placed him on a slightly constructed litter, and thus conveyed him within doors, where he was hospitably received. So-called drunken dogs, and other uproarious persons, were consigned to the pig-stye; and if any one was detected in any act of gross immorality he was tied to the tail of a cart or sledge, and in this ignominious position exhibited to the bridal company, but suchlike practices are now done away with.

In the parish of *Sveg* (Herjeådalen) the 'Bröllop,' in accordance with ancient custom, is kept up for several days, and is conducted in a somewhat expensive manner.

The greater number of weddings take place in the month of March, or during Easter, but some at Whitsuntide. The invited guests are always provided with viands of various kinds, so that they may be said to be self-maintained. The host finds ale and brandy, of which there is in general an ample supply. One, nevertheless, seldom hears of altercations, but all goes on quietly and well.

Besides the bridemaids who accompany the bride to church, she is escorted by a number of young bachelors, here called bridesmen, all of whom are on horseback both during winter and summer. Large metal bells are attached to the heads and necks of their steeds, and the tails, manes, and forelocks of the animals are moreover decorated with ribands; some of these youths join the procession at the 'Bröllop-house,' but the larger number on the road.

When the *cortège* has proceeded a certain distance, the cavaliers in question, two and two a-breast, and in regular order, ride in advance to the sacred edifice; but on reaching the latter, they immediately wheel about and make the best of their way back to their friends. Thus they continue galloping to and fro until the bride and bridegroom arrive at the churchyard wall; when, drawing up on either side of the way leading to the parsonage, they exhibit themselves to the admiring eyes of the numerous spectators.

The costume of the bridegroom is somewhat remark-

able. Over his black dress he wears a 'clerical cloak,' and a large collar, shaped like an outspread fan, of fretted work edged with lace, and ornamented with parti-coloured ribands made up into 'love knots.' His hat (the brim of which; commonly looped-up, is now drawn down) is bound round, checker-wise, with silver chains, and to its broad band are appended a number of silver coins that hang down at the sides.

The bride in former times wore a sort of epaulette of silver, I believe, and about her waist a belt or girdle of the same metal; the skirts of her gown were, moreover, fringed with silver galloon, but at the present day she is attired by the clergyman's lady after the mode common in Norrlands.

The marriage ceremony performed, and the service over, the newly-wedded pair leave the church, and afterwards treat with bread and brandy all such of their friends and acquaintance as are not invited to the wedding; and, if they be wealthy, it may be the whole congregation. Those, however, who are thus entertained are expected to acknowledge the compliment by contributing a trifle, through the medium of others,—hence called 'Sent money'—to the collection subsequently made for the young couple.

The nuptial procession on its return to the 'Bröllop-house' is received with music and other demonstrations of gladness, and after the ceremony of 'Säng Ledning' has been gone through, they all sit down to the banquet.

Amongst the guests, in accordance with ancient custom, is the 'fool,' and the more singular his attire and the cleverness of his tricks, the more surely does he re-

commend himself both to the good graces and pockets of the company. In former times this important personage used to accompany the wedding party to church, but disagreeables occurring in consequence during divine service, a stop was put to the indecorous custom.

Two several collections, consisting of money, silver, and cattle, are made during the 'Bröllop.' The first, which is chiefly confined to the relations of the bride and bridegroom and the married people, at the banquet on the wedding day, and the money then subscribed is generally retained by the parents of the young couple that gave the entertainment. The second collection—the 'giving to the cradle'—is made on the succeeding day, when the whole company, especially the young people, are expected to contribute. This collection, which, including the 'sent money,' generally exceeds in amount the first, and which is duly announced to the company, falls to the newly-married couple.

At the dinner on the succeeding day of the wedding, a signal is given, either by the discharge of a gun or a flourish of music, for the introduction of porridge eaten with butter or fat; and when this has been discussed, the bride, should her circumstances admit of it, is expected to make return gifts to the guests, and every one of her kinsfolk at least should have something. Hence, when girls are about to be married, they are accustomed, long before the 'Bröllop,' to distribute wool, &c., to relatives and friends, all of whom are obligated to knit for her a stocking, a mitten, or the like.

The so-called '*Stamp-Dans*,' a kind of polska, accompanied by music and much stamping of the feet, which

was once so common, now, however, never takes place; and the discourse held by the clergyman on the occasion of the health of the recently wedded pair being proposed, is almost discontinued.

In the parish of *Hedesunda* (Gestrikland), on the occasion of a large 'Bröllop,' no less than 10 kinds of viands, four of which are prepared from milk, and one of the number of grits, are served up at the wedding banquet; and when anything that is roasted, whether it be flesh or fowl, is placed on the table, the fiddlers play a tune applicable to the particular dish—such as roast hare, fatted pigs, &c.

As regards the parish of *Wisserum* (Calmar), I am in the dark as to the manner in which betrothal and marriage is conducted. We read, however, 'that in March, 1847, a rich peasant made a "Bröllop" for his daughter, who was wedded to the son of another peasant. The festivities lasted from Sunday to Friday. The first day the guests were about two hundred in number, and on the following days from seventy to eighty. The bride's attire at her nuptials consisted of thick black silk; and on each succeeding day she wore silk dresses, each one varying in colour from the other. The father and grandfather of the bride subscribed one thousand rix dollars (some £60 of our money) and two fatted oxen; but neither the money nor the beeves would have sufficed for the entertainment, had not additions been made to both the one and the other.'

CHAPTER V.

WEDDING CUSTOMS IN THE OLDEN TIMES, AND ORDINANCES RESPECTING THEM FROM A.D. 1644—1742.

BETROTHAL.—MAIDEN'S EVE AND BACHELOR'S EVENING.—CASTING THE SPEAR.—THE BARBER.—THE FIRST BORN BABY.—THE FOREST JOURNEY.—PARTING SCENE.—SACREDNESS OF MARRIAGE.—ORDINANCES FROM 1644—1742.

ALTHOUGH many of the ancient customs and superstitions relating to the 'Bröllop' are still retained by the Swedish peasantry, others are now in disuetude or forgotten; and in this chapter I shall therefore make mention of a few, either not spoken of or only partially so in these pages, that were common during the reign of the great Gustavus Vasa, now more than 300 years ago.

The ceremony of betrothal was then performed in this wise: after that the suitor had obtained a favourable reply from the girl of his choice, her father, or guardian, as the case might be, in the presence of the assembled relatives, laid the hands of the contracting together with these words: 'I give thee my daughter to honour and wed, to lock and key, and to one-third of the moneys thou at present or may hereafter possess, in accordance with

the law given to the Swedes by St Erik. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' Afterwards the intended nuptials were announced in the church to the congregation by the priest on three several Sundays.

The wedding in those days always took place in church. The day previously the bride took a bath, accompanied by her early playmates, whom she invited to celebrate with herself this her so-called maiden's eve, on which occasion there was no end of fun and frolic amongst them. A banquet followed. In one of the dishes—'maiden's porridge'—was introduced a single bean, and the girl who was fortunate to find this in her spoon was congratulated by the rest as the next to be married.

The bridegroom also passes this night (with him designated the bachelor's evening) with the friends of his youth, when, over the tankard or otherwise, they enjoyed themselves as best they might.

As the bringing of the bride from her home by the bridegroom and his friends for the purpose of escorting her to the church, the solemnization of the marriage by the clergyman, and other matters relating to the 'Bröllop,' were then conducted in much the same manner as already spoken of, I shall content myself with saying, that the wedding has from time out of mind been always looked on as a sort of coronation, and that therefore the man from thenceforward was called, in the old language, '*husets drott*,'—that is, king of his house, or master in his own house.

In heathen times, at the sacrificial feast, the king himself always slaughtered the horse, the flesh of which was then looked on as the most delicate of viands, and the

animal itself, in consequence, as the most acceptable oblation to the gods; and after that the meat had undergone some culinary process, it was cut up by the priests of the temple and divided amongst the people. So in like manner at the nuptial banquet—such at least was the case up to a recent period—the clergyman himself was expected to carve the several joints, because the guests looked on everything as in degree holy that was touched by him!

On the morning of the day succeeding the wedding, after that the bride and bridegroom had risen from the nuptial couch, and that the wedding guests had assembled in the bridal chamber, it was long the custom to cast a spear, or lance, from out of the window amongst the crowd assembled beneath.

According to historians, this usage originated in the heroic ages, and implied that the wife should not only accompany her husband to the tented field, but aid him in every way in guarding his own honour and that of his family.

Others, however, contend that the custom—which was common not only during heathen times, but long subsequent to the introduction of Christianity into Sweden—had its origin from a widely different cause. They say that when the company were collected in the bridal chamber on the morrow of the nuptials, and that the bridegroom was about to present the bride with his morning gifts,* made on the morning succeeding the first

* In Scandinavia, during heathen times, it was ordained that the gifts should not exceed in value forty marks of silver, as also that they should not consist of female finery.

nuptial night, a spear was laid at the feet of the recently wedded couple, whilst he stated of what they consisted. Twelve witnesses took up the weapon; which implied they were prepared to defend the rights of the bride. Afterwards one of them took up the spear and threw it out of the window in front of the house; not, however, to signify, as historians will have it, that the bride should herself make use of it for warlike purposes, but as evidence that the marriage had been completed according to the forms of law.

'A spear with the Romans,' the critic in question goes on to say, 'was suspended over the house where an auction was held. May it not, therefore, be that with the old Gothic people this weapon also signified a sale or bargain? and this the rather because, when the bridegroom presented his "Morgon Gäfva" to the bride, he always stipulated for a valuable one on the part of her relations.'

The 'Bröllop' then, as now, usually lasted for three or four days, though at times for a whole week. Each day had its own special games and pastimes; such, at least, was the case in Sunnanskogs,* as related by one who took part in the wedding festivities.

On the second day after the nuptials, the guests were awakened at an early hour in the morning by thrilling music, the ringing of bells, and all kinds of discordant noises. A number of youths, disguised in fur cloaks, that were turned inside out, their beards and eyebrows blackened with soot—and headed by the soldier of the '*Rote*,'†

* Which includes all the provinces south of the two large forests, Tiveden and Kolmorden, or what is otherwise called Götaland.

† The greater part of the Swedish army, both infantry and cavalry, is directly provided by the owners of the land. Each regiment of 1000 or

attired in a similar way to themselves, and who was mounted on an ox, decorated with garlands of flowers and parti-coloured ribands—marched in procession through the village, heralding the approach of the newly-married couple, who paid visits to every homestead, and treated its inhabitants to cakes and brandy.

When at length all the guests were assembled in the apartment wherein the wedding festivities took place, the soldier spoken of, who exhibited the greatest possible agility of limb and volubility of tongue, made his appearance amongst them in the character of a barber. He wore a white apron, and had in his hands meal, or the like, and a powder-puff; and, whilst descanting with much humour on the occurrences of the past night, he called forth the guests by twos and twos—always ludicrously paired as to sex, age, and size—and desired them to seat themselves on the chopping-block, that he might dress their hair. The musicians now struck up a merry tune, and whilst our barber, with ridiculous attitudes and antics, danced to it amongst the guests that were seated, he, to the great amusement of the company, combed and powdered their heads.

Afterwards two of the bride's-men went about with a plate to collect money for the musicians, singing to each guest as follows :

'There has come into this land
Ladies and relations.

1200 men is located on a certain territory, generally coincident with the province, and such territory is, therefore, divided into 1000 or 1200 '*Rotar*, or allotments, each consisting of one middle-sized property, or several small ones, which have to find, and, in time of peace, support, one man, or a man and horse. Each 'Rote' finds its soldier a cottage with some land, together with a small pay, and so forth.

Give unto the fiddle-band
According to inclination.'

On the third day in the morning one saw the tallest youth in the company wrapt up in swaddling-clothes, in like manner as a baby, and seated in a vehicle made to represent a cradle, traversing the hamlet in all directions, our garrulous soldier making proclamation in the while that the baby in question was the little firstborn of the newly-wedded couple; and also predicting that its fate would be a singular one.

In the afternoon a game called the 'Forest journey' was played. Our soldier, disguised in the manner described, was seen seated on two '*Skogs Kälkar*,' i. e. short sleigh runners, supporting only a cross-bar, used for conveying timber-trees from the forest; the fore part of the log resting on the cross-bar, and the after part trailing on the ground in the snow, or supported by another 'Kälke.' To these were harnessed, or rather attached by means of ropes, some 40 stout young fellows; and, although it was then summer-time, they drew it, at the top of their speed, over cultivated fields, ditches, and other impediments, until they came to a spruce-pine, previously selected for the purpose, which, with their axes, was quickly laid prostrate. The tree was then placed on the 'Kälkar,' the musicians seated themselves amongst the branches, and in this wise the joyous party retraced their steps to the home.

A little fire-wood was then cut from it, when the soldier, taking up an armful, and, followed by the younger portion of the guests, danced a so-called '*Lång-Dans*' into the house, and through all the rooms, in the fire-places

of which a few billets of wood were placed, that fuel and warmth might never be wanting in the dwelling of the newly-wedded pair. Other dances were afterwards danced by the company, who likewise amused themselves with various games and pastimes.

On the fourth day, when the bride was to be conducted from the house of her parents to that of the bridegroom, and when only the near relations of the family remained, the clergyman was invited. The bride's chest, with the key in the lock, stood in the middle of the apartment. Her parents and brothers and sisters placed within it, stealthily as it were, other small presents besides those they had already made her, but of which she was not to be cognizant until it was opened in her own abode. A faithful menial in a Swedish peasant's house is not looked on as a slave, but as one of the family. A servant girl of about the same age as the bride, and who had been her companion for seven long years, likewise crept up to the chest, and deposited therein a silver tea-spoon, saying to herself, whilst a tear rolled down her cheek, 'She will also think of me when she takes this up in her new home.' All was soon in readiness for the bride's departure. The father locked the chest, and gave the key to his daughter. The clergyman, a worthy person, held a short discourse on the bride's childhood and of her parental home.

The chest was then lifted from the floor, and borne away by four stout youths. The parting was quiet and solemn. The father and mother embraced their daughter, and remained at the door-step until she was out of sight. Fine words and a noisy display of grief are not usual on these and similar occasions. The feelings of a Swedish

peasant are still and deep, without storm and waves.

All the neighbours in the hamlet to which the young couple remove were assembled at the bridegroom's house, and soon after their arrival the company sat down to '*Hemkonnst-öl,*' the banquet spoken of in Chapter III., when many a cup was drained to the health of the newly-wedded couple, the clergyman during the repast exhorting them —as became good Christians—to receive the young folks with love and friendship.

On the following Sunday the bride and bridegroom, together with the whole of the bridal party, proceeded to the church, with much state and display, to exhibit to the congregation, not only themselves, but their honourable company. Presents of all kinds were then made on the altar to the clergyman. Cheeses and cakes are specially named in the old chronicles.

Marriage by the Swedish peasant has always been looked on as a sacrament, the wedding-ring as an earthly token of something pertaining to heaven, where pure love alone exists; because the ring, being without beginning or end, betokens eternity; and love, like gold, is the most precious gift God has bestowed on mankind. It is in marriage, moreover, that our Lord's union with His Church is symbolized; and so it was understood in Popish times, for in the mass it was said, '*He* (the man) *shall love her* (the woman) *in like manner as Christ loved His Church,*' and hence those who took part in the wedding, whether as bridemaids, bride's-men, or other attendants of the bride, their persons were sacred three times over; and in the old laws they are designated 'sacred people.'

The presence of the clergyman at the marriage feast is

the delight of the peasantry, and is looked on as almost as indispensable as at Divine service. When he says 'Grace,' before and after the repast, every one clasps his hands together, waiting for him to give utterance to words in accordance with their own feelings. It is his speech, when proposing the health of the newly-wedded pair, and the words with which, prior to the blessing, he concludes the meal, that gladdens and uplifts their hearts.

As has been seen in the foregoing pages, the 'Bröllop' with the Swedish peasantry is not unfrequently celebrated with much ceremony and display, and that the festivities consequent thereon often last for several days, whereby an expense is incurred that many, probably, can ill afford.

Formerly this used to be especially the case with the higher classes of society also, who on the occasion of a wedding not only gave magnificent banquets, but indulged in games and pastimes of a costly character, amongst the rest, the enacting amongst themselves regular plays representing the exploits, &c., of the heroes and heroines recorded in the Sagas. By all classes, in short, the 'Bröllop' in the olden time was conducted with so much extravagance as to call forth the rebuke of the government, as the accompanying ordinances will show, which are not only curious enough in their way, but will, if I mistake not, provoke a smile with the reader.

Those of the 5th of Oct., 1644, 19th of Dec., 1668, and 12th of May, 1669, specified in what manner the 'Bröllop' of the burghese, the clergy, and the nobles, was to be celebrated; but they, for the most part, had reference to somewhat trifling matters; as, for instance, whether the banqueting-table was to be square or oval, the kind and shape

of the confectionery, and the like. People were, moreover, forbidden to dance so long as the viands remained on the festive board; to employ more than six musicians, or to pay each of them more than four rix dollars, equivalent at that time to about as many *Tunnor*, or sacks of rye.

Prior to 1664 the bride, agreeably to ancient usage, always took a bath on the evening preceding her nuptials. She was conducted to her bath by '*Jungfruar*,' or young unmarried females of her own rank, and '*Hederlig Hustruar*,' or honourable matrons. In advance of the company was borne beer, which served to cool and refresh them. But these bath-room evenings, as they were called, which were commonly celebrated with much pomp and great entertainments, were altogether prohibited in the above-named year.

By the ecclesiastical law of 1686 it was further ordained, 'That the clergy, whose duty it is to set a good example to others, be enjoined, in the way of their calling, to dissuade the parties about to be married from all superfluity in regard to both viands and liquors, as also from getting intoxicated. No wedding procession was to proceed to the church with drums beating, discharging firearms, or making other unseemly noises; and that when the wedding was solemnized on a Sunday, it was to take place at a proper hour, so as not to interfere with Divine service, and be unaccompanied by all reprehensible behaviour, such as scandalous excess in gluttony and drinking, shouting, screeching, wrangling, and quarrelling, oaths, swearing, and fighting; and he who offended in these matters, and did not desist when warned, was to be fined five "*Daler silfver mynt*," equal to about half-a-crown of our money, or be

placed for two successive Sundays in the stocks before the church door.'

On the 22nd of October, 1723, again, the government on the representations of the clergy, ordained, 'That at the "Brollöp," independently of pastry, fruit, &c., there should not be more, at the utmost, than eight dishes, and four dishes of salad, or the like, which cannot be looked on as a regular dish; and that at the "*Confect Bröllop*" (literally confectionery wedding), which as heretofore is permitted, the confectionery may be partaken of in moderation, but that it is forbidden at such weddings to prepare a regular meal. And he who by means of various subterfuges and inventions transgresses in these matters,' the edict goes on to say, 'is liable to a fine of one hundred *Daler silfver mynt*, or about £3 of our money, for his Majesty; the king is always desirous of seeing his faithful subjects vie with one another in matters of economy.'

The entertainment here spoken of, we may add, is similarly designated at the present day, only cakes and wine are set before the company. It does not take place at any particular hour, the guests being invited either before or after noon.

On the 24th of September, 1731, it was further decreed, that the 'Bröllop' in the rural districts should not at the utmost continue for more than two days. This regulation did not, however, apply to the parents, children, or brothers and sisters of the newly-wedded couple; but all others who remained longer were each to pay to the church and the poor of the parish a '*Daler silfver mynt*.'

And in the year 1742, it was ordained that in towns the 'Bröllop' should commence so early in the day that

it might, without fail, terminate by 12 o'clock at night; that the bride should not go from guest to guest soliciting presents, but those in indigent circumstances were permitted to place a bowl or plate on the table, in which every one was at liberty to deposit what he pleased; that no one unasked should presume to take on himself the inditing of a nuptial gratulation, under a penalty of 12 '*Daler silfver mynt;*' that all couples on the first occasion of the banns being published, were to contribute according to their means to the poor, and that when the 'Bröllop' itself took place, the guests were to be prevailed on to subscribe to the infirmary in Stockholm, or other charitable institutions, &c.

CHAPTER VI.

SUPERSTITIONS RELATING TO MARRIAGE, PREGNANCY, AND CHILDREN.

THE EVIL EYE.—THE NIGHTMARE.

REGARDING courtship and the wedding numberless superstitions are entertained by the Swedish peasants, of which a few are subjoined :—

If, for instance, a youth and a maiden eat of the same piece of bread, or the like, they will fall in love with each other.

A youth must not present his intended with a knife, scissors, needles, or other sharp implements, as such cut love ; nor shoes, or she will leave him for another ; neither must he give her a pocket-handkerchief, for this will wipe away her inclination for him.

A maiden should not look at herself in the glass after dusk, or by candle-light, as men in that case will no longer admire her.

Should a spinster see a person sweeping the floor, she herself must take a turn or two with the broom, or at least handle it, otherwise she will not be married that year.

If a girl is kind to the cat, she may look forward to

fine weather on her day of honour, that is, the one on which her nuptials are solemnized.

Should a girl not be married so soon as she wishes, and, in consequence, imagines she is bewitched, she must seek aid of the 'wise woman.'

Whilst preparations are going on for the nuptials, one must not make a noise with the pole with which the water-tub is borne, or there will be quarrelling amongst the guests during the festivities. Further to guard against this evil, two boys should be stationed at the boundary gate of the homestead, and egged on to fight each other.

People who eat or sing whilst on the way to church won't get married that year.

If any one is wedded in unusual haste soon after the 'banns' are published, the union will not prove a happy one; a couple of weeks at the least ought to intervene.

The marriage should take place during the first quarter of the moon, and then the circumstances of the young couple will be constantly improving.

On the night preceding her nuptials the bride should have a boy-baby to sleep with her, in which case her first-born will be a son. But if she be not a virgin, she must not wear the church coronet on her wedding day, or her offspring will have scrofula. If other ornaments worn by the bride glitter or shine, it is a proof that she is in reality a maid; but if, on the contrary, they have a dull and heavy appearance, it is believed she has already lost her virginity. The like inference is drawn if the horses neigh during the nuptial procession to church, or that the strings of the violin snap.

And if it so happens that the bride is not a vestal, the

hair will fall from off the heads of her bridemaids, more especially if these be uncovered. Should they, however, place small copper coin in their hair, this misfortune, perchance, may not befall them.

If the wedding *cortège*, when on the way to the sacred edifice, keep well together, the marriage will prove a happy one.

Should it rain on the nuptial day, the young couple will be rich; and if it so chances that a child is then christened, their offspring will be numerous.

Should a funeral take place on the same day as the wedding, the bridal pair must remain outside the church until it is over; for should they enter whilst the grave is untenanted, they will be poor.

If several couple are married at the same time, ill luck will attend one or other of them.

Whilst the connubial knot is being tied, it is needful for the bride, should she wish in after years to have the upper hand in the house, to place her foot in advance of that of the bridegroom, and to drop, as if by accident, her handkerchief or glove upon the floor, which he, out of politeness, picks up. His fate will then be to bend the back during the whole of his wedded life.

And whilst kneeling at the altar, the bride must place so many of her fingers on some part of her bare person as she may wish to have children.

It is, moreover, believed that the first of them—whether it be the bride or the bridegroom—that looks back whilst at the altar, or that first falls asleep in the nuptial couch, will be the first to die.

When, again, the pair are at the altar, they must incline

their heads towards each other, in the belief that the affection thus mutually expressed will be lastingly blessed. The bride must also stand close to the bridegroom, so that the 'Evil Eye' may not come between them, and thus cause strife and variance, or separation and death.

The superstition of the 'Evil Eye,' it may be remarked in parenthesis, is generally understood to have had its birth in the far East; but should it be of Scandinavian origin, as many will have it, I know of no solution other than the dread the old Northmen entertained for the so-called '*Seidman*,' a practitioner of the very blackest kind of sorcery, of whom it was said, 'that everything about him was terrible; that his predictions could never be evaded; and that a mere glance of his eye would cause whatever it rested on to wither and decay.' But let this superstition have originated where it may, certain it is that the Swedish peasantry of the present day attribute evils of all kinds to the 'Evil Eye.' They say, for example, 'that if the person possessed of it looks on whilst an ox or other animal is being slaughtered the creature will have difficulty in dying;' that if it rests on a horse, 'the spirit of the animal will be stolen from it;' and that with the 'Evil Eye' alone 'the witches can commit murder.'

The bride, on returning from church after the wedding, should dismount quickly from her horse, snatch off the bridle, hit the animal on the nose, and loosen the saddle-girths, in which case she will have an easy labour. The like object may be gained if she creep through the harness, more probably the *collar*, which, with the peasants, consists of two pieces of wood (shaped so as to fit the shoulder of the horse), closed both above and below with a strap, so

that it fit the animal whether he be large or small. In that case, however, the child will be a '*Mara*,' or night-mare, which is said to be '*Fœmina semper impubis*;' who, excepting by this sign, knows not that she is a 'Mara.' She is believed never to have rest at night; and that so soon as she falls asleep she is carried away in an inexplicable manner, to disturb and torment the sleeper, though she herself is not aware of it. She is said to come into the room through an auger-hole in the wall to the person she is about to torment; and if this hole be stopped up whilst she is still in the room, and that the sleeper can collect his thoughts sufficiently to seize hold of her, she is at once transformed into various animals. Should she be kept prisoner till daylight, she will then throw off her ghostly disguise, and become like unto other people; but if allowed to go her way, she will always be a 'Mara,' and when she awakens she is faint and exhausted, and knows not what has happened.

We are further told that if one lays steel on a person ridden by the 'Mara,' or calls suddenly to the sleeper, he will be freed from the dread encumbrance.

As a provision for her accouchement, the bride on the first night of her marriage must place a cake of bread and a cheese by her side in the nuptial couch.

Whilst the cloth is being laid for the wedding dinner one must be silent, and the guests will not then talk too much during its continuance.

And should the individual who lays the cloth blow or strew linseed under it, or place a dung-fork beneath the table, the guests won't be able to eat much.

At the nuptial banquet the bride must taste of every

dish, as also bite the table-cloth; and she will not then, when *enceinte,* be troubled with 'longings.'

So long as the wedding festivities last the viands must remain, night and day, on the table, 'that food and drink may never fail the assembled guests.'

Regarding women when in the family way many superstitions are also entertained.

A woman at such times, for example, must not go bare-headed, or 'the child will be subject to scrofula.'

The like malady will be brought on her offspring should she, when taking part in a funeral procession, see the bottom of a coffin as it is borne up a steep acclivity, an untenanted grave, or a corpse without touching it.

An empty sack, untied at the mouth, must not be carried before a woman in a state of pregnancy, or 'the hunger of the child will never be appeased.'

And should a woman, when in that condition, pass under a hide from which the hair has not been removed, without laying her hand on it, her offspring will have the measles.

If she peeps through a crevice in the door, or an auger-hole in the wall, the child will squint.

And should she stand under a saw,* where people are at work, her offspring will have a rattle in its throat resembling the noise made by sawing.

If she eat of the egg of the gray-hen (black game), the infant will be freckled, and if of a chicken, it will be 'goose-skinned,' in like manner as a plucked hen.

* In Sweden, instead of the *saw-pit* so common with us, the operation of sawing planks is usually conducted on a sort of platform, open beneath, that is raised above-ground.

Should she smell a corpse, the child will have bad breath.

If she kick or touch swine, the child will have a disease called *Svin Kopper*, or it will speak through the nose, unless several hog's-bristles are placed in the water wherein it takes its first bath.

Should she have seen a house, or other building, that has accidentally caught fire, her offspring will have a fire-mark; and if she sees a saddled galled horse, it will have an open sore on that part of its body where she first touches her own person with her hand after having seen the wounded animal.

If she walks over a grave where, from the coffin having decayed, the ground sinks under her feet, the child will be subject to epileptic fits. And should she enter a house where a person is weaving, and leave it again before the web is cut from the loom; or if, when weaving herself, the pains of labour come on her before the work is finished; the like disorder will befall her offspring. In the latter case, however, the evil may be averted by her cutting away the cloth already woven, and by passing the child, before it is christened, three several times through the loom itself.

If, moreover, she sees a person suffering from epilepsy, and does not lay her hands on him, and take from him a portion of his clothes, which must be included in her first wash; or, that she goes to church on some quarter-day, namely, those of Christmas, Easter, Midsummer, and Michaelmas, the infant she bears under her bosom will be subject to the infliction just named.

And should she see a half-cloven block of wood, in the

opening of which the wedge used in dividing it has been left, or a hare with its head on, the child will have a hare lip. Hence, in Sweden, in accordance with universal custom, so soon as a hare is shot, its head, with the exception of the ears, which remain attached to the skin, is with a knife severed from the body. On one occasion, indeed, when I brought one of these animals into a house where there was a young female *enceinte*, the poor creature was so very greatly distressed that, to relieve her apprehensions, I was obliged to take an axe and chop off its head.

The superstitions regarding children are something like unto legion.

When, for example, the child is born, and until such time as it is baptized, the *fire* must not be allowed to go out in the room, or the 'Troll' will exchange it for another, and hence the term 'Byting,' or 'Changeling.'*

When steel is struck against flint, I may remark in parenthesis, the fire elicited is said to resemble the forked lightning with which the god Thor, as we read in the Scandinavian mythology, pursued the giants, whom he afterwards slew with his redoubtable 'Hammer.' Wherefore fire, together with flint and steel (as also silver, but why the latter metal I know not), have ever since been the terror of the powers of darkness; and, as will be seen in the following pages, are constantly resorted to by the common people to keep evil spirits at a distance.

* We in England, when announcing in the papers the birth of a child, usually describe it 'as a "*fine*" boy or girl,' as the case may be; but in Sweden the little stranger, supposing it to be of the male sex, is almost universally advertised as a '*well-shaped* boy.'

In the child's first bath there should be placed the mother's wedding-ring, silver money, and silver that has been inherited. That is, cups, spoons, &c., believed to have been presented to the ancestors of the parents by beneficent beings of the other world, and which are, therefore, looked on as a palladium, that no price will induce the owners to part with. In this case it will be rich. Let a fresh-laid egg be placed in the bath, and its skin will be fair; a red clout, and it will have a blooming complexion; chips from a chopping-block, and it will then never have to lay its head on the block; the embers of a house or other building accidentally burnt down, should its mother have seen such a fire; hogs'-bristles, should she have touched swine; part of the clothes of a criminal, should she have seen one;—everything, in short, she may remember to have seen or touched, whence injury to her offspring may be apprehended. By the adoption of these means the child will be exempted from all kinds of 'Mother's marks.'

Should there not be sufficient water in the house for the child's first bath, it must not be sent for, as in that case '*Necken*,' who rules the floods, and of whom more elsewhere, might enter the door at the same time and injure the infant. Milk or beer is, therefore, to be substituted for the purpose in question.

No one must enter the room whilst the child is in the bath, or it will not thrive.

The water in which it took its first bath must not be thrown on the ground under the bare heavens, but emptied under the flooring boards of the apartment. Otherwise the elves, and other evil spirits, will not only

prevent the child from thriving, but so injure the mother herself as to prevent her from leaving her bed in health, or, it may be, cause her to become insane.

Immediately after the birth of the child a book must be placed under its head, 'that it may be quick to learn.'

A newly-born male child should be clad in a *shift*, and a female child in a *shirt*. 'They will then be accepted when making proposals of marriage.' In both cases the linen should be new, and 'they will not then wear out their clothes so soon.'

If the child be exposed in the open air, so that the moon shines on its face, 'it will not be sunburnt.'

It should not eat and read at the same time, 'or it will have a bad memory.'

If a child be laid in a chest, the lock of which '*Smäller*,' or sounds, when the key is turned, and that the mother afterwards seats herself on the chest and partakes of food, 'her offspring will not then have *Kiste-knappar*, that is, small pointed pustules on its body,' a disease caused, as it is believed, 'by the mother, when *enceinte*, having eaten whilst sitting on a chest.'

When a child gapes, a cross must be made over its mouth, as also on its cradle.

The latter, whilst empty, must never be rocked, 'or the child will be noisy and puling.'

Should a firstborn child have *teethed* when it comes into the world, as is said at times to happen, and that it bites a whitlow, a cure, as it is believed, will be effected.

If it cuts its teeth, or begins to walk and talk, sooner than usual, 'it is a sign it will soon have a brother or sister to drive it from its mother's breast.'

A child must first touch a dog and not a cat, 'that its flesh may heal the more readily.'

And should it take pleasure in bathing, 'it will be lasciviously inclined.'

If a child is to thrive, 'it should not be "*Loused*" on a Sunday, but, in preference, on a Saturday; and that if only loused at the back of one ear, and not of the other, it will be bitten by a dog.'

On a fine day, it is to be remarked, one not unfrequently sees the mother or the sister sitting at the cottage door, or on a sunny bank, relieving the head of the child from disagreeable visitors. The custom would appear to be of very long standing, for in the old fairy tales and giant stories, which date back ages and ages, we constantly read, as will be shown hereafter, of even kings' daughters thus employing their delicate digits.

Should a child be placed on the back of a horse, 'it will be enabled, in after life, to cure the disorders to which that animal is subject by merely laying its hands on it.'

One must not bear water into a room where there is a young child, or take it in one's arms, or pass between it and the fire, without first touching the latter.

On paying a visit to a woman recently 'confined,' one must, on entering the house, place one hand on the oven.

When a child has convulsions consequent on 'teething,' 'its clothes must be cast into the fire.' Hence its first garments are usually made of coarse and less valuable materials, so that the loss of them may not be great.

If the mother be overburthened with milk, 'a portion of it must be thrown into the fire.' Finally,

'Mothers,' M. Holmberg tells us, 'have a special

dread of the evil eye, and believe that a sickness, to which infants are subject, is caused by *people of ill repute* seeing their babies when in a state of absolute nudity, for which reason they tie a thread around its naked arm, so that, even if divested of all its clothes, it may still have something about its person.'

For the 'evil tongue,' the Rev. gentleman goes on to say, 'the mother is also greatly afraid, more especially lest the infant should be called handsome. If this happens she, in a voice modulated according to the rank of the offender, desires the latter to salute the child in its nether regions. Not impossibly the origin of a 'Billingsgate' expression of our own to the like effect.

CHAPTER VII.

BAPTISM IN WINGÅKER, DANMARK, WESTBO, AND BOHUS LAN, IN THE OLDEN TIMES.

CONFIRMATION.—ORDINANCES FROM A.D. 1644—1686.—SPONSORSHIP.—SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING BAPTISM.—'CHURCHING;' SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING IT.

THE sacrament of baptism is, I believe, administered in Sweden in much the same manner as in the Church of England; and with the more wealthy of the peasantry the '*Barns-öl*'—literally, child's ale, as the entertainment given on the occasion is called—not unfrequently lasts for several days.

For the most part, the child is only a few days old when christened. The ceremony sometimes takes place at the house of the parents or at the parsonage, but generally in the church itself.

The latter is the case in *Wingåker* (for though there are two parishes, eastern and western, they are called by one common name), in the province of Södermanland, in reference to which a Swedish writer observes :—

'We see in the sanctuary a holy rite performed, one of the most beautiful of the Church. The music of the church bells, sounding over mountain and valley, has already summoned the people to assemble in the house of

God. In their presence a tender member of the congregation is borne to the altar to be admitted to the same faith, the same confession, the same hope, as ourselves. Fervent prayers from relatives and friends, and all present, are joined with the congratulations with which the venerable clergyman, in the name of the church, greets the little citizen of the world, and recollections of their own holy, earnest vows, arise in the minds of all. It is a solemn hour, devoted to hope and memory.'

In the parish of *Danmark* (Upland) the baptism takes place at home or at the parsonage, never in the church. In former times one of the sponsors, on the morning of a Sunday or other holy day, rode, with the child in her arms, to the sacred edifice, where, before the commencement of the service, the rite in question was performed, and after its completion the unmarried female sponsors handed the infant to its mother; but at the present day the ceremony usually takes place on the afternoon of some week day. The clergyman receives the child from the married female sponsors, and after that it has been baptized he delivers it to the husband, who subsequently restores it to his wife. The so-called soap-money, subscribed for the infant, is not collected at the banquet given on the occasion, as is usual in many parishes, but when the repast is over, and that the guests return thanks to the hostess for the good things they have enjoyed, each one slips a piece of money into her hand. At a large '*Barns-öl*' it is not uncommon thus to collect from 20 to 30 rix dollars.

It may be here remarked, that after meals in Sweden it is customary for the guests not only to thank the host,

but for the latter to reply, '*Wälbekommit*'—the meaning of which is, 'that he hopes the viands they have partaken of may do them good.' The like wish is also not unfrequently expressed by the one guest to the other. This singular custom, common to both the higher and lower classes, and which is of very ancient origin, arose from the belief entertained by the old Northmen, 'that such expressions had the power to nullify any ill effects that an envious or jealous person might, by his "evil eye," have cast on the repast.'

In the 'Härad' of *Westbo* (Smäland) the '*Barns-öl*' is a usual accompaniment to the christening, on which occasion the invited guests, as at the wedding, are expected to contribute their '*Förning*,' or supply of good things, to the feast.

On the morning of the day on which the child is to be baptized, the '*Bära Gumma*'—old woman who, as her Swedish name denotes, is to bear it to church, comes to the house of its parents, and not only places some silver coins in its bosom, but attires it in a new shift and cap, as presents from herself. If it be a male child, the female sponsors are always more numerous than those of the other sex; but if a female child, the male sponsors outnumber the female sponsors; and this for the reason 'that when hereafter it makes proposals of marriage, it may not receive "Korgen,"* or a refusal.' The reverse of this practice obtains in the Church of England, where there are ordered—for a male child, two male and one female

* As a '*Korg*,' or basket, is made of *willow twigs*, is it not probable that the term of '*weaving the willow*,' as applied by us in England to an unfortunate fellow who has been *refused* by a pretty girl, is derived from our Swedish friends?

sponsor; for a female child, one male sponsor and two female.

One of the sponsors should be a matron capable of suckling the infant when on the way to church. Should there be several children to be christened at the same time, the women who have carried them, with their charges, range themselves, according to the 'standing' of the parents of the infants, to the right and left of the font. Nevertheless the male children are always baptized before the female; and the '*Klockare*,' or clerk of the parish, must change the water for each child.

On the return of the party from church to the '*Barnsöl Hus*,' as the house where the festivities take place is called, the 'Bära Gumma' is always placed in the high-seat, which is that of honour. She dines with the other guests, and during the entertainment has the child on her knee, attired in the same dress in which it was christened. After the repast is over, sponsor gifts are collected, and subscriptions made for the musicians and the poor. Subsequently there is music and a dance, which is led off by the 'Bära Gumma.'

'In the province of Bohus baptism,' M. Holmberg tells us, 'usually takes place in the church or at the parsonage, and but very seldom at home.'

'It is singular,' he goes on to say, 'that though in some districts this ceremony cannot be too long deferred, yet in others the anxiety people evince to have it performed is so great, that at times the child is carried to the clergyman before it is half a day old, and this often to a distance of from seven to fourteen miles, and during the most severe weather. This injudicious custom arises from

the belief that Satan has power over the child until such time as it is baptized, a belief that annually costs the lives of many newly-born infants, and every means should be adopted to put a stop to the practice.'

I myself can fully corroborate M. Holmberg in this matter.

Once when wandering during the depths of winter in the wilds of the Wermeland forests, I, late one evening, took up my quarters at a peasant's cottage. We all slept in the same small apartment. In the course of the night the wife, to my great horror, was brought to bed of a 'well-shaped boy,' and two or three hours subsequently a female friend and the husband went off with the urchin, after that it had been well wrapped in swaddling clothes, to the residence of the clergyman of the parish, which was miles and miles away, that it might receive the benefit of baptism. Had the poor little thing died before this rite had been performed—not an improbable circumstance—the thermometer being then far below zero of Fahrenheit, its parents would doubtless have considered it as doomed.

As the general reader may not be familiar with the subject, I subjoin a few particulars as to the manner in which the baptismal ceremony was in early Catholic times conducted in Sweden.

This sacrament was then called the purifying, or the dipping, and the baptismal font was called both 'well' and 'spring.' People when christened in those days were altogether immersed in the water. Such was the custom in 1030, during the reign of King Anund Jacob, when the rite was administered—the service being read in Latin by the sides of lakes, rivers, and springs. Henning

Laurentius, who in the year 1342 was Archbishop of Upsala, when on a visitation in Torneă, where he consecrated the burial-ground, christened many Lapps and Finns in a capacious tub in front of the chapel. But since churches have been erected in Sweden, people have for the most part been baptized within them.

The first part of the ceremony took place in the capacious porch, at the entrance to the church. The godfather held the child until it was christened, but afterwards it was given in charge to the godmother. The font was previously consecrated, 'lest some one might have desecrated or misused it.'

Agreeably to the rules of church services of 1529, the baptismal rite was then administered as follows :—

The priest first inquired the name by which the child was to be called, and afterwards repeated these words :—'Depart from him (or her as the case might be), thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, through the power of Him who shall come to judge both the living and the dead. Amen.' This exorcism ended, the priest made a cross on the face and breast of the child, and said, 'Receive this sign of the Holy Cross over both thy face and breast.' Afterwards he laid his hand on its head and prayed thus :—'O Almighty and everlasting God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously look upon thy servant whom thou hast called to thy kingdom.' He then repeated another prayer, and after placing a particle of salt, previously consecrated, into the mouth of the child, said, 'May God, who has made thee, enlighten thee and give thee wisdom's salt, which shall be thy guide to everlasting life. Amen.'

The salt was intended to represent the durability of the solemn compact into which the child had entered; for in like manner as salt preserves from corruption, so it is looked on as a symbol of constancy. For the strengthening of friendship, salt was made use of in the olden times; no one will then betray a guest, even though he were a blood enemy. 'He is my brother in Christ, and has eaten bread and salt with me.' Even at the present day superstitious people are uneasy should salt be accidentally spilt on the table-cloth, 'believing it to portend that concord and good luck in the house will not be of long duration.'

The priest next repeated the great exorcism, which ran thus:—'I conjure thee, thou unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that thou departest from out of the body of this, God's servant, which shall be the temple of the Holy Ghost. And know thy doom, thou ugly devil;* let the true and living God have honour; let His Son, Jesus Christ, have honour, and the Holy Ghost have honour, and flee from this, His servant; for behold God and our Lord Jesus Christ have called him to His grace, blessing, and baptism. So now fly away, thou ugly devil, and have no communication with this, God's servant, who foregoes the things of this world and seeks after those that pertain to God.'

This exorcism ended, the priest read a prayer, and afterwards the 13th verse 10th chapter of St Mark. He then laid his hand on the child's head, and, together with

* The foul fiend, one of the Old Gentleman's titles with us, is undoubtedly of Scandinavian origin. The foul being the Swedish *ful*, 'ugly,' only differently spelt, and 'fiend' being the exact Swedish word for enemy.

its godfather and godmother, fell on his knees and repeated our Lord's Prayer. Subsequently he took the child by the hand and led it, or rather perhaps its sponsor, from the porch into the body of the church, when he said, 'The Lord guard thy ingoings and outgoings now and for evermore.' Then covering the child over with a white linen cloth, he gave it his blessing, with these words, 'May Jesus Christ clothe thee with that unspotted robe thou shalt wear undefiled before His judgment-seat on the last day.' Lastly, he placed a lighted candle in its hand, saying, 'Take thou this burning lamp in thy hand and blamelessly keep the vow made by thee this day, so that when our Lord cometh to the marriage, thou with the elect may go forth to meet Him, and enter with Him into everlasting joy.'

Confirmation, which followed at an after period, was also accompanied with very many ceremonies. The bishop every third year held a visitation in the diocese, when the sponsor presented to him his godchild, now several years of age, that he might be confirmed. The bishop, amongst other forms, made a cross on the forehead with an unction composed of oil and balsam, and said, 'I mark thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' Afterwards he bound a fillet about the child's head, and gave it a gentle blow on the back. This was called '*Forma*,' from the Latin word '*Formare*,' or confirmation.

The above form of baptism and confirmation continued for a number of years; but since 1529 omissions and alterations have from time to time taken place, and at the present day, as already said, neither of these cere-

monies differ very materially from the customs of the Church of England.

Christenings formerly—especially among the higher classes—were in Sweden usually celebrated with great banquets and otherwise in a very expensive and extravagant manner, the guests being numerous, and the festivities kept up for several days. In consequence, however, of the complaints of the nobles and clergy, royal ordinances were issued in the years 1644, 1664, 1668, and 1669, which greatly tended to reduce the cost of these entertainments. In the towns, for instance, viands, liquors, and confectionery, were altogether forbidden on these occasions; as was also the then prevalent custom of sending round cakes, sugar, &c., to friends and acquaintances. But in the country, such of the guests as were invited as sponsors, and that came from a distance, were allowed to be treated with an ordinary meal in like manner as other travellers. The forwarding of valuable presents to the newly-born babe—a practice then carried to excess—was in 1664 altogether prohibited, 'unless its parents were so poor that one sent them something in the shape of alms.' But at an after period the very restrictive laws in question were, I believe, greatly modified.

By the royal edict of 1686 again it was ordained, 'that at the baptism of a nobleman's child there should not be more than nine sponsors, but fewer in preference;' 'at that of a clergyman's child two, or at the most three, of each sex (together with the midwife), whether the ceremony takes place in the church or, from necessity, at home;' and at that of a burgher's child, 'not exceeeding three of each sex.' 'For the rest,' the ordinance goes on to say,

'one may invite as sponsors whomsoever one pleases, provided they be of the Established Church, of age, and are well acquainted with their catechism. He, however, who has been convicted of some notorious vice, or that has ever lain under the ban of the Church, may not act as a sponsor, unless he has amended his life; wherefore the parents of the child are required, prior to the ceremony, to notify to the clergyman of the parish the names of the intended sponsors, so that no disorder may take place after the parties have entered the church.'

Sponsorship in former times, as known, placed many impediments in the way of marriage. The Emperor Justinian, who died in 565, ordained that the sponsor should not wed the individual baptized. Subsequently a Church Council went still further, and forbad an union not only with the child for whom one has stood sponsor, but the mother herself in the event of her becoming a widow. At length, indeed, marriage was forbidden between the sponsors themselves, and that under the pretence of its being a spiritual relationship; hence it was called '*Gudsivi-Lag*,' or holy law, which the pope was the more anxious to retain, because by dispensing with it in particular cases he was enabled to put large sums of money in his pocket. Swdeen, as well as other countries, was therefore necessitated to submit. This happened, probably, when *Jus Canonicus* was adopted, in the Upland Law, published in 1296; and in the year 1368, the Archbishop Berger, at a meeting held in Upsala, made proclamation that a marriage between parties who were spiritually related, through sponsorship at the baptismal font, was unlawful. These senseless restrictions were put an end to in Sweden at the Reforma-

tion, when it was declared 'that as the law in question was a mere human law, and without the sanction of God's word and command, and moreover rested on no reasonable ground, therefore it should not stand in the way of marriage, excepting *casum scandali.*

The superstitions regarding baptism are numerous.

Until such time as the child is baptized it must be watched over, and fire kept burning in the room, and silver or steel must also be attached to its clothes; 'that the "Troll" may not have power over it.'

A bit of bread should also be given it, and afterwards to a dog, 'and the animal will then be afflicted with all the maladies destined for the infant.'

Should the mother handle cutting implements whilst the child is unbaptized 'it will be unlucky, and often injure itself, either with the axe or knife.'

And until it be christened the mother must neither eat nor drink whilst it is at the breast, as otherwise 'its hunger and thirst will never be appeased.'

'Should a cat run under a coffin, and afterwards under the cradle of an unbaptized child, the latter will be a nightmare.'

A child born on a Sunday will not live long; but should it survive, 'it will be able to discover ghosts, and to destroy dragons who keep watch over hidden treasures.'

An unbaptized child must be placed on a table, wrapped up in a red cloth or mantle, a psalm-book and a pair of scissors placed crosswise on its breast, 'and evil spirits cannot then injure it.' Should it be laid in a cradle 'it will be unquiet and squall.'

When a child is about to be christened the mother

must slap it nursery-wise, 'that it may have a good memory.'

And when borne from out of the house on the way to church, the mother, should she have strength sufficient, or some one else who wishes it well, must meet it at the threshold, 'which, they believe, will insure it good luck in time to come.'

The woman that carries the child must not allow any one to pass her on the road, 'or her little charge will, in after life, allow itself to be oppressed, or rather, perhaps, imposed on. If she walk or run quickly, 'it will be lithe of limb and agile;' and should she dance it in her arms at the subsequent banquet, 'it will be smart and sprightly.'

On entering the church the 'Bära Gumma' must gently knock the head of the child, and afterwards its feet, against the door, 'and it will then never have "*Kyrko-Knappar,*" a cutaneous disease, the pustules being thought to resemble coffin-nails, with which it might otherwise be afflicted, in consequence of its mother when pregnant having inadvertently touched one or other of the numerous large nails in the church portal.'

Should the 'Bära Gumma' have lost or forgotten anything when the cleryman is about to christen the child, 'it will be forgetful;' but if she silently repeats the prayers after him, 'it will have a good memory, and be apt to learn.' If during the ceremony, and afterwards whilst leaving the church, she holds her charge high up in her arms, so that it may be seen by every one, 'it will not be shy or bashful, but the contrary.'

If the child be named after a person that lived not

long, 'it will soon die;' or if after some one still living, 'either that individual or the child itself will either not thrive or shortly be no more.' It will take much after the person whose name it bears, as also after the 'Bära Gumma.'

Should the child have been conceived before marriage, the mother herself must hold it at the font, 'or otherwise it will not be legitimate;' and if born previous to her nuptials, 'she must, when standing as bride at the altar, bear it on her own arm.'

A man and his wife, or a betrothed youth and maiden, must not stand opposite to each other when officiating as sponsors, 'or their married life will prove unhappy.'

'Neither must a pregnant woman hold a child at the baptismal font.'

The first time that a bachelor stands godfather to a child it should be to a girl, but a spinster, on the contrary, to a boy; 'otherwise it will be difficult, if not impossible, for it to get married.'

Should a child cry whilst at the font, 'it will have a musical voice.'

If a female child be baptized with water previously used for the like purpose for one of the opposite sex, 'it will have a beard and masculine appearance.'

The water with which an infant has been baptized is believed to be possessed of extraordinary virtues, and is used as a remedy for various disorders.

When the child is brought home from church after being baptized, the mother must meet it at the door with a cake of bread, 'that it may never stand in need of food;' and it must sleep with her in the same dress in which the

ceremony was performed, 'in which case it will be re-'ligious.'

The ceremony of 'Churching' of women after child-birth differs but little, I believe, from the form of the English Church; and in the case of a wealthy or well-to-do family, is frequently followed up by an entertainment called literally 'Churching Ale,' which at times lasts more days than one.

Formerly—provided the weather permitted—this took place in the open air in the church-yard, or else at some house in the near vicinity. Here the mother, accompanied by her female guests, who, with their 'Förning,' were contributors to the feast, treated all her friends and acquaintances—or it might be the whole congregation—to bread, brandy, and a kind of cake made of wheaten flour: but this custom, owing to irregularities that took place, is now discontinued, and the entertainment in question is given at the woman's own house.

Superstitions are rife in connection with the 'Churching of women.'

Until this rite of the Church has been performed, for example, 'the mother of the child must, on no account, stir abroad.'

And so long as she has a '*Hedna-hud*'—literally a heathen hide—that is, until she has been 'Churched,' she must have silver and steel about her person, 'that she may not be bewitched.'

Prior to setting out for the church—where the ceremony in question is always performed, 'she must be smoked with a linen rag, as also step over a live coal; in which case evil spirits will have no power over her.'

Should she hurry home from church after the completion of the ceremony, 'she will soon again be in the family way;' and if, when stepping over the threshold of the church-porch, her right foot be foremost, her next child will be a boy—but if the left, a girl.

p. 111.

TOMB OF A VIKING.

CHAPTER VIII.

FUNERALS.

FUNERALS IN THE OLDEN TIMES. — CUSTOMS IN BOHUS LAN. — PERSONALIA, OR ACCOUNTS OF THE DECEASED READ IN CHURCH. — CUSTOMS IN WESTBO HARAD; IN DANMARK; IN TORNA HARAD; IN HELLESUND; IN UPPER ELFDALEN. — ORDINANCES FROM A.D. 1644—1731.—SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH-YARD. — ORDINANCES OPPOSED TO IT.—THE NORTH SIDE.—ABOLITION OF CATHOLIC RITES.—SUPERSTITIONS.

THE manner of disposing of the dead has in Sweden varied greatly in different ages, and the learned have therefore classified the several modes of interment in three distinct periods. The first inhabitants placed the body under great heaps of stones called '*Grifter*' and '*Stenrör*,' afterwards '*Kummel*;' and this, the first period, has therefore been called the '*Kummel-Ålder*,' or Age. Such continued to be the manner of burial until the advent of the Historical Odin, which occurred about 100 years before the time of our Saviour, when the dead were consumed by fire, and their ashes, after being placed in urns, were buried in the earth. Then commenced the second period —the so-called Burning Age. When the young Frej died, however, they did not burn his body, but deposited it in a lofty mound, which practice was generally, though slowly, adopted; so that from the year 610 the Burning Age

may be looked on as at an end, and the Mound Age—the third in order—to have begun.

The last-named custom prevailed at the time of the first introduction of Christianity into Sweden, about 1000 years ago, and was retained—as being more in accordance with the manner of Christian burial—for a considerable time. In the year 1070, and long afterwards, indeed, the Barrow—as this sepulchral mound is called—was equally had recourse to as the church-yard, but at length it was only the latter mode of burial that prevailed.

At the present day the funeral with the Swedish peasantry—as will be seen in the following pages—is conducted in a very simple and unostentatious manner; though so much can hardly be said of the entertainment which usually accompanies it, which is often on a considerable scale, and lasts for several days. As some one truly says, 'A feast with them is as much a sign of sorrow as of gladness.' And though on these occasions everything would seem to be conducted with propriety and decorum, it is to be feared that at times the pleasures of the table are not the only attraction, for I have heard of such a thing as a quiet dance having been got up at the house where the obsequies of the deceased are celebrated!

In many places in the more southern parts of the province of Bohus—so we are told in substance by M. Holmberg—the corpse, either the preceding evening or on the morning of the funeral, is brought from the outbuilding where it was deposited soon after death, to the dwelling-house itself. In the olden time—and the custom, I believe, is very generally continued—the body, when the

spirit had departed, was laid on *straw*, in memory of the Christian's hope through *Him* who was born on straw. Should its removal take place in the evening, it is watched and prayed over during the night by two of the nearest relations. On the lid of the coffin, which is painted black, and is neat in appearance, and on which is inserted some passages of Scripture, are placed two lighted candles over the head and breast of the dead man, and remain there until he is carried out of the house. This is no doubt a Catholic custom. Candles, in former times, were blessed by the priest, and were consequently looked on as holy.

Even if the body be in a state of decomposition, yet, strange to say, a plentiful repast is partaken of by the company in the very same room in which it lies, than which nothing more disgusting can be imagined. The meal over—and that the corpse may be present at it is evidently intended—the lid of the coffin, as also the piece of fine linen cloth covering the face of the departed, are removed, which is the signal for one and all present to burst out in chorus in tears and lamentations.

The funeral always takes place on a Sunday. On the removal of the body from the house, prayers are said, and a psalm sung. The bier on which the coffin rests is followed to the church by the assembled company, both men and women. On the arrival of the mournful procession at the sacred edifice, it is met by the clergyman, when the pealing of the bells cease, and a funeral psalm is sung whilst the coffin is being lowered into the grave, and after that the service over the dead has been read by the clergyman, and that he has thrown three shovels-full of earth on

the coffin, it is filled up by the nearest male relatives of the departed, a second psalm being sung in the while.

In the Island of Tjörn and some other places, profound grief is expressed by an unshorn beard, and shabby worn-out clothes. The mourners, moreover, sit in the more remote parts of the church.

In many of the 'Härads' of this province, M. Holmberg further informs us, the '*Personalia*,' that is, a succinct account of the life and death of the deceased, which after the sermon is read by the clergyman, is omitted altogether, but in others the people seem to consider such as indispensable to the happiness of the dead man in the next world.

The greater part of the biographical sketches in question are, I believe, the compositions of the clergyman himself, and are often interesting. To give the reader a better idea of their nature, I subjoin two in my possession, the first relating to a youth who met with an untimely grave.

'"There is but a step between me and death," * said a man whose life was at that time in imminent danger; and every-day experience shows the truth of this saying. If we always thought and saw how near Death was to us, how closely he follows our steps, how soon he comes up with us, then we should tread the uncertain path of life with more caution, and count the passing moments, and contemplate with awe his inevitable approach. Of what immense importance is this step. We must all take it, and how soon it is taken. In one moment we are snatched from the theatre of life, on which we appeared as passing

1 Samuel xx. 3.

shadows! What a difference between the light of day and the darkness of night; the warmth of life and the chill of death; the animated feeling of existence and the moulder-ing grave!

'We have now before us a melancholy instance of the uncertainty of human life. A young man, in the bloom of youth, in the full enjoyment of health and vigour, is in a few moments bereft of existence—lifeless. What an example does that corpse exhibit to us! What does it say to us, though dumb? What I have just said, "There is only one step between me and death."

'He that has now taken this last earthly step, and whose remains we have this day consigned to the grave, Olof Carlsson, from Bu-torp, eldest son of Carl Dickson and his wife Christina. He was born the 22nd of October, 1810, and was drowned in the river Uf, the 30th of last month, being then in the 18th year of his age. This unlooked-for event is to be deeply lamented for many reasons.

'All participate in your sorrows, disconsolate parents. You are advanced in years; heavy will be the afflictions of your old age, now that they can no longer be lightened by the hand of your child. You had without doubt fondly anticipated that he would have been the prop of your de-clining years, when you were tottering on the brink of the grave, and have rendered you the last sad offices by closing your eyes.

'For many reasons, the departed has made himself worthy of our regrets. One of the sublimest, and, alas, unusual, epitaphs of our days which we can inscribe to his memory as an example for the present and future genera-

tion, is, that he was never known to take the Lord's name in vain. For this he deserves our unqualified praise, that sin being unhappily so prevalent. According to the concurrent testimony of every one, the life of the deceased in other respects was irreproachable. He was always to be seen near his aged parents. The evening of the day may be different from the morning. Every one knows in what short space of time this unhappy occurrence took place. Thus hastily was the prop of your old age and the good example for youth, hurried into another life. But you sigh heavily. Do you think he is gone for ever? I will pour balm into your bleeding hearts: the departed live, and we become immortal through death. He is only gone a little while before you. When you have finished your course on earth, you will find him in the blessed abodes of eternity. And time flies so fast, that perhaps in a few moments some of us will be reckoned among the dead.

'"Uncertain 'tis, when, how, and where,
We reach our earthly goal;
Therefore each hour for death prepare,
Be ready, O my soul."'

The second '*Personalia*' that I have by me, which pays a just tribute to the memory of an amiable and virtuous young woman, is to the following effect:—

'"Let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rose-buds, before they be withered."*

"With this exclamation, happy youth, you hasten out to the enamelled meads and find the air pure, the sky clear, and the earth enchanting. Everything smiles, everything breathes life, everything sings praise, everything exhales perfume, and inspires serenity and pleasure.

* Book of Wisdom in the Apocrypha, chap. ii. 7, 8.

'Yes! enjoy in innocence that happiness which is so short, that good which is so evanescent. Do you, in the fear of God, rejoice in the buoyancy of health and spirits? Do so gratefully, before age approaches, and evil days advance, and autumn and winter arrive. Alas! they soon appear. But are you certain you will witness either season? Are you even certain that you will reach the summer? What is your life? A breath, a grain of dust, which is carried hence by the gentlest breeze.

'"As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."*

'But Death does not neglect even the "flower of the spring;" yea, he takes pride in crowning himself with rose-buds before they be withered.

'We have seen this often—we see it here. He has wreathed in his pale garland this rose, which, early broken from its stem, cannot now receive nourishment from the earth, nor colour and freshness from these faint and powerless sunbeams.

'Ought we not to repine at this? To many it may appear as if contrary to the order of nature to be carried off so early, as if the object of life were hereby defeated, as if the aim of our being were incomprehensible or unjust. But to those who contemplate it from a higher point of view; to those who know that man has to attain a brighter, a happier state of existence, to which this limited one is merely initiatory; this dispensation will appear in full accordance with a holy and gracious Providence.

* Psalm ciii. 15, 16.

'To me it has always seemed to be an act of peculiar grace in God to remit the more tedious, the more difficult, the more perilous trials; to save his creatures from evil and from seductions—to withdraw them, as Scripture says, from a life amongst sinners, before vice confounds the understanding, or false doctrine deceives the soul.

'And in particular it may be asked, what has the young female to expect, who with care cultivates her heart and understanding; with success brings to perfection the delicate virtues and amiable qualities of her sex; what, I repeat, has such an one to expect in a world where the most virtuous must often be united to, and supported by, the most vicious?

'Had the departed only expected happiness from such a source she would have been undeserving of anything better, and might equally be pitied, whether she had attained or failed in her object.

'But excellence requires not the aid of unworthiness. It is a tender plant, but it can nevertheless support itself; and though bashful of display, will obtain respect from its own intrinsic merits. Ridiculed both by the butterfly and the grub, it equally despises the trifles around which the one flutters and which the other contaminates. Alone, she prefers standing in a circle of kindred scions, supporting with them their earthly protector, until the angel of peace comes, and transfers her to a better world.

'So happily, so speedily, became this the lot of her, the good daughter, the tender sister, whose withered remains we have now before us, but even of which we must also soon be bereft. She herself has gone before us to that place where virtue has its residence amongst the holy,

and innocence its crown amongst the happy. High above was registered the object of her silent wish, which is now fulfilled. It never interfered with her round of duties, nor with harmless mirth; but it saved her from the vanity of the times, and from the giddiness of a transitory world. It gave her a true and deep feeling, a tender and gentle seriousness, a disposition mild and pure, and devoted to her God. Unassuming and indefatigable, she discharged her earthly trust; tending her father's house, comforting her father's heart, and guiding those who, motherless, like herself, but of more tender years, required and acknowledged her more mature discretion, her more steady counsel. Her charge she has accomplished, and she has already reaped the reward.

'Let her enjoy it, thou sorrowful father; and reflect that neither thou nor the world could so reward her. Reflect on this, and in the happy conviction of a soul so exalted, and in still happier anticipation, let joy again take possession of thy bosom, and brighten the evening of thy life. Thou hast sent up to thy beloved wife a sure and welcome pledge that thou wilt also follow after, when thy calling on earth has been fulfilled.

'Mayest thou, in the mean time, long survive, cherished by those thou still pressest to thy paternal bosom! May they, with thee, and us, by repeated and tender contemplations on the dust which rests here, and the spirit which animated it, learn to understand both the brevity and importance of life—man's instability here, and imperishability hereafter.

'"Whene'er we cover with the sod
That which is dearest to the heart,

Bid us remember, gracious God,
That we must all from hence depart.
Teach us to conquer trials here,
And so to run time's arduous race,
That we, and all we hold most dear,
May meet before Thy glorious face."'

In the 'Härad' of Westbo (Smâland), on the day preceding the funeral, the inhabitants of the village and the relations assemble at the house of mourning; and at an early hour on the following morning those also who are invited to the '*Lik-öl*,' literally, corpse-ale, as the entertainment given on the occasion is called.

All the guests having arrived, the company sit down to a regular repast; and when this is over, every one who so desires has liberty to see the body. The coffin is blackened; some years ago I. H. S., signifying '*Jesus Hominum Salvator*,' as also a number of fancy devices, which, in the eyes of the common people are looked on as decorative, were chalked on its lid. Two hazel wands—one at the head and the other at the feet—were bent, bow-form, over the coffin, on which rested the pall, secured in such wise to the bier that it could not be carried away by the wind. But at the present day both the inscription and the wands are laid aside, and the pall is simply thrown over the coffin.

Our Lord's prayer is said whilst the coffin is being borne out of the house. The four appointed 'bearers' then take up the bier, and set forwards towards the church. These men must be in some way related to the departed, though not nearer than first cousins. Sons-in-law, nevertheless, are at times invited thus to officiate. The two bearers of greatest consequence support the head of the

corpse, and the other two the feet; and so far as the land of the deceased extend they must carry their mournful burthen without being relieved; and, as a consequence, the task at times is rather a severe one.

The funeral procession moves in the following order:—First, the female guests; second, the clergyman—should he be present—as also such persons of condition as may be desirous of honouring the obsequies of the deceased; third, the bier on which the body rests; fourth, the general company, who by turn relieve the bearers;—and lastly, the family of the departed.

So soon as the procession is seen from the church the second ringing of the bells takes place, and that for the congregation to enter the sacred edifice, when it has reached the church porch. A psalm is sung whilst the body is being borne to the grave, and a second psalm after the burial service has been read, whilst the grave is being filled up.

Subsequently, and after the sermon, the 'Personalia,' just spoken of, is read by the clergyman from the pulpit.

On the funeral *cortège* leaving the church, each of the bells is tolled three several times. Then the '*Testaments Rigning*,' the final ringing, which also ends by the tolling of the bells, takes place, though this is not without a certain payment to the church.

On returning to the house of mourning there is no procession, and only the bearers, the relatives, and the neighbours are invited to go home.

Still-born children are seldom interred before the mother has been 'churched,' and should be borne to the grave by old men.

The head of the corpse must always lie so as to face eastward, whence the call of resurrection is expected. The grave mound is protected by '*Eksyllar*,' that is, by a sort of frame-work of oak planks or boards placed around it; and upon this mound is raised an iron or wooden cross, or a high, flat, and smooth stone, on which is inscribed the name of the deceased, and the date of his birth and death.

In the parish of *Danmark* (Upland), the entertainment given on the occasion of a funeral is on an equal scale with that of the Bröllop. (See Chap. IV. p. 60.) If the family be well-to-do in the world, the deceased is always buried on a Sunday morning.

The clergyman and invited guests then repair to the house of sorrow to breakfast, and this over, the mournful procession sets out for the church, though at so early an hour as not to interfere with Divine service. The coffin is decorated with a head and foot plate, and a cross on the lid; at times, also, with stars and plated feet. After the sermon the 'Personalia' is read by the clergyman; and on the grave of the deceased man is subsequently erected a wooden cross, with a plate, on which his name, &c., as likewise an appropriate verse from a psalm, is inscribed.

When the service is over the funeral company return home to dinner; but one seldom sees the bereaved widow at table; and so long as the usual mourning lasts, the near relatives of the deceased never stand up in church along with the rest of the congregation when the Gospels are read. The women, indeed, do not look up, but sit, as a mark of deep sorrow, with their heads covered and bent down.

In several of the parishes of *Torna* '*Härad*' (Scania)

the women take part in the funeral procession; and from distant homesteads and villages one often sees the mournful *cortège* in carriages of one kind and another when on the way to church. The peculiar way in which the women on these sorrowful occasions arrange their head-dress, consisting usually of a white cambric handkerchief, gives the whole affair a very melancholy and solemn appearance.

In the parish of *Hellestad*, in the above-named 'Härad,' a funeral, like a wedding and a churching, is accompanied by an entertainment, which usually lasts for several days.

The 'presses,' the clock, and other articles of furniture in the room where the obsequies of the deceased are celebrated, are covered with white linen; and on a paper, affixed to a sheet hung to the wall at the upper end of the table, is inscribed the date of his birth and death, together with some Bible lines. At times, however, the several letters of the inscription—as also an hour-glass and flowers, cut out of black paper—supply the place of the written memorial. In some instances one sees both of these decorations, if such they can be called. A white linen cloth is likewise fastened to the ceiling immediately above the table, in the centre of which is a cross, and to each of its four corners a rose, either formed of black riband or cut out of black paper, is attached. With the wealthy, at times, the whole of the apartment, walls, ceiling, and all, are clad with white linen cloths.

Two lighted candles are placed on the lid of the coffin, but these are extinguished when the corpse is borne from the house, which office is performed by the relatives of the deceased.

It is seldom that a 'Personalia' is read by the clergyman.

The entertainment commences with a dinner on the day of the funeral, when the table groans with drinkables and eatables of various kinds. The latter consisting of *Lut fisk*—that is, cod or ling previously immersed for a time in a solution of *Lut*, or potash (a dish peculiar, I believe, to Sweden), strong bouillon, salt meat and pork, &c.

This repast is, however, hardly over, when the company again sit down to the evening meal, which lasts until a late hour, when roast meats, game, rice-porridge, together with sugar-cakes, &c., are served up. 'Surely,' as M. Holmberg observes, when speaking of the 'Bröllop' in Bohus-Lan, 'the strength and capacity of northern stomachs must be very great.'

In the parish of '*Fjelie*,' also, in the 'Härad' of Torna, an entertainment called '*Arede*' is held in honour of the deceased. Every one in the immediate neighbourhood where he resided is invited to take part in the funeral procession, but to the entertainment in question only those who belong to the *Laget*—meaning, I take it, such as are part proprietors of the land attached to the hamlet. This law is held most sacred, and without regard to relationship.

During the continuance of the 'Arede' the widow and the grown-up children of the deceased remain in a separate apartment, and are not seen amongst the guests either during or between meals. In other respects the entertainment in this parish is conducted in much the same manner as the 'Bröllop.'

In the parish of *Hedesund* (Gestrikland) the nearest

female relatives of the deceased wear a mourning-hood of cambric, which hangs down to the shoulders and back, so that only a small portion of the face is visible; and on the day of the funeral all the mourners sit in the last pew in church.

'In *Upper Elfdalen* (Wermeland),' writes Major Falk to me, 'the dead are attired in altogether new clothes, which every one, even the very poorest, purchases during his life-time, and preserves with the greatest care for the day of his burial.

'And when an unmarried female dies,' my friend goes on to say, 'a small mirror is placed by her side in the coffin, so that when the last trump sounds, she may be enabled to adjust her tresses prior to appearing before the dread tribunal.'

By the upper classes, at least, in Sweden, the funeral, as with the wedding, was formerly conducted with much pomp and ceremony, and, consequently, at very great expense. To remedy in part this evil, and in the hopes that the money thus squandered might be appropriated to more useful and praiseworthy objects, such as the support of schools, hospitals, &c., the government, between the years 1664 and 1669, issued several edicts wherein, amongst other things, it was ordained—

'That in future the funeral was not, as heretofore, to be divided into two acts; namely, the deposition of the body in a building appropriated to the purpose in the churchyard without the service of the dead being read over it, and its actual interment with the usual rites and ceremonies; that the coffins of people of condition should be comparatively plain; that the enshroudment of the

body was to take place without pageantry; that the deceased was not to be clad when laid in the coffin, much less buried with the pearls, precious stones, chains, and rings of gold, and the like, that pertained to him; that neither for the nobility, the clergy, nor the burghers, should the church bells be rung more than four times; the first, for the soul of the departed, immediately after death; the second, the day before the burial; the third, when this took place; and the fourth, after the coffin was lowered into the grave. It was further ordained, that the several ringings should not last more than half an hour; and in no case elsewhere than in the parish where the deceased resided; that in towns no banquet was to be given on the occasion of a funeral, but that in the country moderate hospitality might be exercised.'

In 1668 it was known as an old and established custom for psalms to be sung whilst the corpse was being borne to the grave; and if it was that of a nobleman, for the children of the school of the parish where the funeral took place, or of the adjoining one, to form part of the mournful procession, which was headed by the clergyman, who gave out the psalms. But in 1688 this custom, as regarded the rural districts at least, was forbidden.

In 1719 it was further ordained that the corpse should not be buried in the night time, or late in the evening; all interments were to take place during the day, and at a proper hour; so that no one, whatever his rank, could bury his dead unless the funeral service was over before dark. About the year 1720 people were so superstitious, that the body of a female dying in child-birth was carried into the church prior to interment; probably in the belief that

she would thereby receive her 'churching,' and not be laid in the grave as 'unclean.'

And in 1731 it was ordered, that, in towns, no others were allowed to carry the corpse than certain individuals appointed by the magistrates, with the exception of the poor, who might be borne to their long homes by relations and friends. At the interment of people of condition, however, he who so wishes it may, for the carrying away of his dead, make use of the services of the friends, acquaintances, and dependents of the deceased—always provided that no entertainment, gift, or other expense come in question; but when the friends of the dead man walk by the side, and support the pall, no other than those deputed by the authorities are permitted to bear the coffin.'

During the early ages of Christianity in Sweden, the church-yard was believed to be possessed of a much greater degree of sanctity than people at the present day are willing to attribute to it: if, for instance, a person sought refuge within its limits, it was equally forbidden to remove him from thence by force as from the church itself.

And in 1528 it was ordained by the great Gustavus Vasa, 'that persons found fighting in the church-yard should be subjected to the penalty of "*Eds öre*," one of the most severe sentences that could be passed on a man.

At an after-period, it would appear that the Government used its best endeavours to discourage the then existing feeling in regard to the sacredness of the church-yard; for during the reign of Charles IX. of Sweden, who flourished at the beginning of the 17th century, it was enacted:—

'No one who dies shall be denied sepulture in the church-yard, that the false Popish religion which maintains that the ground is there more holy than elsewhere, may not be strengthened. Nevertheless, the representatives of those interred there shall give something towards keeping in repair that house wherein God's holy word is preached and the sacrament administered.'

Again, in 1710, when to prevent the plague then raging in Sweden from spreading, the Government directed 'that those who died of that disorder should not be interred either in the church itself or in the church-yard, but in places set apart for the purpose. A portion of the clergy, either from believing themselves, or from being desirous of making others believe, that the ground there was more holy than elsewhere, not only neglected to carry these measures into execution, but both from the pulpit and at public meetings declaimed against them in no measured terms.

As a consequence, the Privy Council, in 1711, ordained:—'That the *Consistorum* should make the clergy sensible of the mischief they had done; as, also, warn them not in any manner to take on themselves, either by word or deed, to oppose regulations solely intended for the public good.' In conformity thereto the Bishop, Jesper Svedberg, on the 1st February, 1711, issued an address to the clergy of the diocese of Skara, in which, amongst other things, he says:—

'It is your duty to remove from the minds of the common people the belief entertained by them that the church-yard has such a sacredness about it; that he who is not interred there suffers not only somewhat in his

honour, but has less chance of salvation. The bones of the dead are far better preserved in other places than in churches and church-yards. Let them lie where they will, all will at one and the same time arise from their graves.'

This address was afterwards read from all the pulpits throughout the kingdom, but it had not the effect of quieting the minds of the people—which object, indeed, was only gradually gained at an after-period by more serious measures.

In Sweden, it should be observed, suicides and great criminals usually find a grave in some out-of-the-way place. Thus it was that once, when shooting in the near vicinity of the town of Wenerborg, I almost put my foot in a decayed coffin, only a few inches beneath the surface of the ground. The poor fellow, its occupant, my attendant told me, died whilst in prison, and had been thus disposed of in dog-fashion.

Should criminals, however, be buried in the church-yard—as I believe at times happens—it is always on the *north side* of the church, where no decent person is ever interred.

This custom is easily explained. In the belief of the common people the 'Black north' is the abode of evil spirits; and should one hear speak of a '*Troll Karl*,' or wizard, of more than usual celebrity, he is sure to be a *Lapp* or a *Finn*. This superstition has probably its origin in the beautiful Scandinavian mythology, which, after describing the abode of the good in a future state, goes on to say: 'But "*Narstrand*," the land of corpses, shall be that of the wicked. The halls of this dreary

mansion, the portals of which face the *north*, are entwined with hideous living serpents that, with their heads inclined downwards, vomit continuous streams of venom on to the floor beneath; and it is here, in outer darkness, that the coward, the poisoner, the adulterer, and the murderer are doomed to wander from everlasting to everlasting.'

The first individual buried in Sweden according to the forms of the Lutheran Church was a smith in the town of Örebro, named Peder Olofsson. His two sons—Olaus and Laurentius Petri, both eminent men in their day—who had just returned from Germany, having turned away the monks who were desirous of conducting the funeral after their own fashion, namely, by consecrating the grave (sprinkling holy water on it), reading masses in Latin, and other Catholic rites. These were, however, all done away with at the general meeting of the clergy in Upsala in 1593, for such custom, said the *Præses*, 'arose from the selfishness of the priests, and were adopted by them solely for their own benefit.'

Besides the superstitions mentioned in this chapter, numberless others, relating to the dying and the dead, are entertained by the Swedish peasantry.

If, for example, any one unbidden enter the room in which a person is dying, 'he will afterwards be subject to epileptic fits.'

Noises—such as sobbing and loud crying—must not be heard in the chamber of death, 'or the half-dead man may be awakened—though, in that case, only to a miserable existence—to one, in short, between life and death.'

Should a person when in the last agonies have on him a garter, or that he lies on a feather-bed, 'it is believed

he cannot expire until the garter be taken off, and he be removed to some other place.'

When a man is dying, a lighted candle should be placed in his hand, 'in which case his life will go out in like manner as a candle when burnt down to the socket.'

Should the head of the dead man incline to the right, 'it is believed some one of his male relations will shortly follow him; but if to the left, one of his female kinsfolk.'

If a man expires in a house where bees are kept, 'the latter will all die unless a piece of turf be laid on the hive; or that the latter be placed on the ground when the corpse is borne away to the church-yard for interment.'

Should the body hastily stiffen after death, 'it is believed that some one of the deceased's relations will shortly be no more;' and the like belief is entertained 'should earth of itself fall into the grave before the coffin is lowered into it.'

Until such times as the latter is ready the corpse, after that it has been washed and a clean shirt put on it, must be placed on a table in an outhouse; but not in the granary, 'for in that case, such of the grain as is intended for sowing-seed will prove unproductive.'

The things on which the dead man sets the most value —such as his tobacco-pipe and pouch, as also a silver coin, should be placed by his side in the coffin, 'or he will find no rest in his grave.'

Should the straw on which a man died be burnt, an axe or other cutting implement hung over the door, or linseed strewed outside of the house, and that one whispers in the ear of the deceased 'that he must not come to life

again,' he will then never appear as a '*Gengångare*,' or wandering spirit.' *

When it happens that more people than usual are seen in company on the road to church, 'a corpse, it is believed, will shortly be borne that way.' The like will also happen if mole-hills are observed by the side of the road, 'if to the right of it, it will be that of a man, but if to the left, of a woman.'

If the dead man in his life-time committed a crime meriting punishment, he will have no rest in his grave, 'unless fire—should he have been deserving of the stake—be placed under his head; or an axe, a halter, or a scourge, should such have been his deserts.'

Should a woman in labour die before giving birth to the child, the clothes already prepared for the latter must be placed beside the mother in her coffin; 'it being believed that she will bring forth whilst in the grave, and that the clothes in question will be required as a winding-sheet for her offspring.'

If the deceased was of a smart and lively disposition, 'the funeral procession will move quickly;' but if he, on the contrary, was dull and heavy in his movements, 'the progress of the mournful *cortège* will be slow.'

And should the bier on which the coffin rests creak, or the bearers grumble, 'some one in the hamlet will soon die.'

If the corpse be borne over a fallow field 'the latter will be unproductive from that time forward,' and if con-

* A superstition originating, it is said, in the doctrine of Purgatory, that the souls of Catholics not quite purified from sin must suffer torments until such times as they are released by the prayers of the faithful.

veyed across a lake, 'there will afterwards be a dearth of fishes in it.'

Should a blacksmith assist in carrying a corpse, 'he will never again be able to forge good edged-tools.'

If the church bells ring distinctly at a funeral, 'they believe the dead man is gone to heaven;' but if the sound be dull, or that anything unusual happens, such as the advent of a sudden tempest, or that the croak of the raven be heard, 'then it is supposed the devil has claimed the deceased as his own.'

One must not convey a corpse in a carriage, 'or the horse will go blind.'

On entering a house where the obsequies of the deceased are being celebrated, 'one must snuff the wick of the candle before paying one's respects to the family.'

If the dog howls or the fox barks near the house, 'it is a sign one of the family will soon die.' The like will happen, it is believed, 'should the owl hoot in the vicinity of the homestead.'

When the child which has already begun to walk creep on all fours on the floor; when one experiences a ringing in the ears; when the Spjället, or slide attached to the stove, vibrates of itself; when one, without thinking of it, begins to sing a funeral psalm; when two sticks are found to lie across each other without any one being aware of having so placed them; or when a cauldron that has been an heirloom, when boiling on the fire, gives forth a peculiar kind of noise from it,—are all portents of approaching death.

'Immediately after the funeral,' says Parson Odman, when speaking of Bohus Län, 'they ignite the straw on

which the corpse lay. Should the smoke, which is intensely watched, descend to the ground near the house, one or other of the family will shortly die; but if, on the contrary, the smoke rises high in the air, or is carried to a distance, sickness and death will leave the abode of the deceased and be borne elsewhere, and in that direction, whether to the east or to the west, that it is wafted by the wind.

'And if hay seed,' the worthy man goes on to say, 'be strewed on the road to the church and about the grave itself on the day of the funeral, they believe that Satan is thereby deprived of his power over the deceased.'

'Excepting when in the very last extremity,' he further informs us, 'people will not send for the clergyman, believing that after the administration of the Holy Sacrament the doom of the sick man is irrevocably sealed.

For the sick, prayers should be offered up in three different churches, one of which should be an '*Offer Kyrka*,' or sacrificial church.

It is the belief of the Swedes, I should add, that the spirit of a corpse not interred in *hallowed ground* will never rest in peace; and hence, in the event of a person being lost at sea or elsewhere, his relations and friends are always most anxious to discover his earthly remains, and give them Christian burial.

They furthermore believe that an infallible means—one to which to my knowledge they have frequent recourse—to recover the body of a drowned individual, is by the aid of a barn-door cock. The bird is put in a bag or covered basket, and the boat rowed slowly to and fro in the lake or river near to the spot where the accident is sup-

posed to have occurred; and when the cock finds himself, by intuition, as it were, over the sunken man, he commences crowing, on which the grapnels are lowered with a tolerable certainty of finding the corpse.

In the mythology of the ancient Scandinavians, 'Hel,' the goddess of the infernal regions, is always represented as accompanied by a cock. Can it be that hence arises the superstition in question?

CHAPTER IX.

FUNEBRIA.

INSTANCES OF NON-DECOMPOSITION.—OF EMBALMMENT.—OF RESUSCITATION.

As not altogether foreign to the subject matter of the last chapter, it may be mentioned that in Sweden, owing to the dryness of the soil or the atmosphere, decomposition of the body is at times very slow. In the year 1842, for instance, a vault was opened in the parish church of Estuna, in the province of Upland, in which were the bodies of two grown persons and five children. One was a large and handsome woman, in such perfect preservation, that it might be supposed she had only recently been interred. Her head was shaved, and on her rounded arm lay the effigy of the child Jesus, with a 'glory' around its head, worked in silk. The coffin, which was of oak, and provided with large and clumsy iron handles, differed in shape from those in general use. The genuine gold galloon, bound three several times around a skull in a lesser coffin, testified that the parties, when living, moved in a superior station.

Excepting in the case of royalty, it is seldom that artificial means are had recourse to in Sweden to preserve

the corpse from corruption. But at times, nevertheless, embalmed bodies are met with.

When, for example, the old church at Hassle, in Westergötland, was pulled down, and the flooring taken up, a coffin of the usual size was found in a bricked-up vault of such small dimensions that a second coffin could hardly have been placed there. The deal boards of which it was made were in appearance quite new, but the black cloth that covered it was in a state of decay. It contained a corpse enveloped in very thin and pure sheet-lead. This, from being bent in at the neck, wide at the shoulders, and narrow at the feet, much resembled in shape a violin case. Three several sheets of lead were used for the purpose, and were so securely soldered together that it was found impossible to separate them. When, however, the lead was cut open, the corpse, that of a man, was found to lie with the face downwards; and, on turning it round, the chin was seen to be covered with a beard of more than half an inch in length. The whole body was swathed with woollen cloths, secured with bands. In the leaden covering was a thick brown and unctuous fluid; and in the coffin a few billets of aspen wood, as also some hops. Several children's shoes, embroidered with gold and silver, were, moreover, found in the vault, which was quite dry.

How long the coffin had been there was unknown, but the church flooring had certainly not been taken up for upwards of a hundred years. The Bishop of Linkoping, A. Rhyzelius, to whom A. Kjevner, the rector of the parish, had written on the subject, was of opinion that the singular leaden case in question had been made abroad for some person who had perished during the Crusades.

Instances of resuscitation from apparent death have not been infrequent in Sweden, of which a few of the more remarkable are subjoined.

In the year 1664 there died at a place called Tibble, in the parish of Tillberga (Westmanland), a lieutenant of cavalry, named Israel Olofsson Färling. He was a severe and passionate man, and, though 77 years old, lived on very bad terms with his wife, in consequence of her being addicted to drink. A week after Michaelmas of the above-named year (1664) Färling, who was then very ill, ordered two of his servants to proceed to Fahlun to dispose of some grain, and on their return, nine days afterwards, they found their master dead, and lying in a so-called '*Bänklär*,'* in a large hall that was without a fire. Shortly afterwards a shroud was put on the body, which was then placed in a coffin, and the funeral was appointed to take place on the first Sunday in Advent.

On the preceding day, that is, some six days subsequent to the man's supposed death, and whilst the bell-ringers and the sexton were sitting together and enjoying themselves in the house of mourning, the wife of a cottager went into the dead room with an armful of firewood, when she found Färling sitting up in his coffin. She was horrified beyond expression, and on his saying, 'Mother Kerstin, give me my breeches and slippers,' the poor woman fainted away. A servant who, from an adjoining apartment, saw her fall, hastened into the room, on which Färling said to him also, 'Give me my breeches and slippers.' The man, whose name was Olle, tremblingly obeyed, and handed his master a pair of black silk small-

* A bin or chest, used also as a bench to sit on.

clothes; but at the same moment Färling lifted his legs from out of the coffin, wherein was afterwards found much blood and sweat that had exuded from his body. Färling then asked Olle 'what he was lying in?' to which the man told him he was laid out as a corpse; but this Färling doubted, and wondered if it was really the case.

At first he was very weak; but when he had tolerably recovered, he sent round to his friends and neighbours, and countermanded the funeral. It is said that he 'afterwards turned over a new leaf,' and warned people to amend their lives and conversation; as also to have shunned society, for which reason he was called '*Nibble-gubbe*,' meaning the old man of Nibble. He died at length on the 2nd of February, 1666, that is, about two years subsequent to his most wonderful resuscitation, at the advanced age of 79.

Again, in the '*Svenska Jordegumma*,' or Swedish midwife, published in 1697, we read of another remarkable instance of resuscitation from apparent death that had occurred in Stockholm several years previously. 'A person in the house of a man of rank had been dangerously ill for some time, and at length, as it was believed, died, and the supposed corpse was laid out on a table. But as after three days, although it was then summer-time, and the weather very hot, it showed no signs of corruption, people began to think life might not be extinct, and it was, therefore, allowed to remain untouched. On the eighth day after that of his supposed death, the man opened his eyes, and gradually came to himself again, but so altered and wasted away, that no one, for the space of two years, could recognize him.'

Again, a doctor in Stockholm, of the name of Wilh. von Droys, who was often afflicted with colic, had one morning in April, 1728, so severe an attack of that disorder, that every one present believed him to be defunct. When, however, his wife, who was absent at the time, returned home in the evening, and was informed of what had happened, she said, 'I suppose it is the kind of death to which he is often subject.' Afterwards she repaired to the supposed dead man, who was lying perfectly motionless on the bed, and, falling on her knees beside the latter, she bent over her husband and commenced rubbing his stomach with both hands in like manner as if she was kneading dough. This operation, which was continued for a whole hour, had at length the effect of causing the supposed corpse, in plain English, 'to break wind,' after which the man began slowly to open his eyes and come to himself again. He lived until the summer of 1732, when he actually died, as was manifest to every one because he then *luktade rätt illa,*' that is, stunk above-ground.

Again, in September, 1736, the wife of a wealthy trader in Stockholm had so severe an attack of hysterics that the bystanders were fully persuaded she was dead. The husband, who at the time was in another part of the house, found, on coming into the room where the supposed corpse lay, every one crying and lamenting, and from fright and grief was for a while altogether beside himself. After that he had somewhat recovered, however, he insisted that his wife was not dead, and he therefore attempted to restore life by administering to her sal volatile and rosemary water; but when he found these remedies of no avail, he bethought himself that if beaver-gall and tobacco

blown into her mouth they might prove more efficacious. Having mixed together the ingredients in the bowl of a common tobacco-pipe, and inserted the other end of it between the woman's lips, he, after lighting the pipe, blew the smoke into her mouth, so that it came out of her nostrils, on which she began to cough. Afterwards she brought up a large quantity of phlegm, and slowly began to open, first the one eye, and then the other, and at length said, 'Oh! how cruelly you have treated me, in not permitting me to die so tranquil a death.' She recovered, and subsequently gave birth to three children.

Again: 'One Sunday, in the early part of July, 1706 or 1707—and I remember the circumstance as if it had only recently occurred'—writes, in 1750, M. Lohman, the incumbent of Tierp (Upland), 'when I was present at evening song, in the church of St Maria Magdalena, in Stockholm, in which city I was born and partly educated, the funeral of a boat-man, drowned on the preceding day, took place. When, however, the corpse was lowered into the grave, a rumbling kind of noise was heard in the coffin, and immediately afterwards its bottom—to the great consternation of myself, the clergyman, and the numerous bystanders—was kicked out! The coffin was subsequently opened, when the shroud was found to be dyed in blood—then warm and smoking—which the man had vomited in his dying agonies.'

Again: 'On the 1st of last January'—such was the substance of a paragraph that ran the round of the Swedish papers of February, 1865—'a peasant, aged 60, departed this life at the hamlet of Mouh-järvi, in Finland; and on the same evening the corpse, after being washed and

provided with a shroud, was borne, as customary, from the dwelling-house to an out-building. The family of the deceased then retired to rest; but at an early hour on the following morning they were disturbed by a loud knocking at the door, and on opening it the old man entered in his winding-sheet, and began to weep and complain that 'they had left him in a room without a fire.' As luck would have it, the weather on that night was very mild, otherwise the apparent death of the poor fellow would have been converted into a reality.'

Again: 'During my stay in the *Skärgaed*,'* says Dr Samuel Naucler, in a contribution of his to the Kongl. Vetenskaps Acadamies Handlingar, 1756, p. 117, 'the following circumstance occurred, which I conceive deserves some attention.—A man, 60 years of age, was on the 23rd of last March cast away during a storm on a rock. He had drank to excess, and immediately fell asleep, and it was not until the following morning that he was found. He was then carried, as a corpse, into a cottage, when I carefully examined him to ascertain if any signs of life remained. The feet were entirely frozen, the toes blackish—with the exception of the big toe on the right foot; the legs, thighs, arms, hands, stomach, breast, and countenance icy cold; the jaws were exceedingly firmly closed, the joints quite stiff, the eyes fixed, and when one touched them he did not wink; no respiration could be observed; neither the pulse nor the beating of the heart were perceptible; but as the pit of the stomach (epigastric region) still felt a little warm, I determined on attempting to

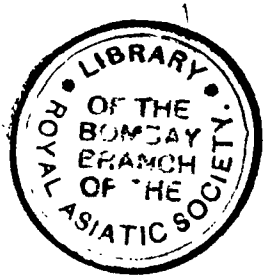
* The belt of islands, as elsewhere said, bordering the coast of Scandinavia.

restore the circulation of the blood, and therefore caused his arms, legs, and thighs to be diligently rubbed with coarse woollen cloths. On the stomach and chest I placed napkins, which at first were only slightly heated, but afterwards, when it was observed that these parts began to feel warm, I increased the warmth of the napkins. As I was fearful that the heat of the room might at first be injurious to the patient, I had him removed from the bed on which he was lying, and laid—with some bedding under him—on the floor itself. The feet I did not trouble myself about, because, if the man should ever recover, it seemed more than probable he would lose them: Here was I in a desert place, far distant from a druggist's and medicines! It might also have happened that not one of the latter, even had I had them at hand, would have had the same fortunate effects as the simple remedy I now hit on. It struck me that as, when housewives have any frozen meat or eggs, they lay them in cold water, which draws out the frost—and this without their acquiring any rotten taste, which otherwise happens—the same expedient ought to be tried on the present occasion. But difficulties stood in the way of its application, the man being so frozen that it was impossible to bend any one of his limbs, and the feet, as a consequence, could not be immersed in the water-tub. I therefore caused napkins, which were frequently changed, to be dipt in cold water and placed on the feet. After a time the stomach and chest began to be warmer, but respiration could not be observed until after four hours' labour, and when it was about two o'clock in the afternoon. There was then no pulse, nor was it possible to force open the jaws. At about four o'clock,

however, the pulse became perceptible; and at half-past six I was enabled, with a silver spoon, to separate the jaws, being desirous of ascertaining if the patient possessed the power of swallowing. I therefore warmed a little wine; and as there was of the medicine called "*Gratia Probatum*" in the house, I poured twenty drops of it into the spoon and gave it to him. So soon as he got it in his mouth he bellowed like a bull, when the bystanders said he gave up the ghost! But, on the contrary, he, after some difficulty, swallowed both the wine and the drops. Afterwards he perspired somewhat in the face, and his cheeks became redder. At five o'clock he began to wink when any one touched his eyes, and at about six o'clock to move his arms a little. I then caused him to be laid in a bed nearer the fire, and warm clothes to be placed over his arms and legs. A couple of spoonsful of warm wine were likewise administered to him. At eight o'clock he began to speak—though at first very indistinctly; but when he could be understood, we found he was fancying he had been in a wood, where he had *fătt ond fäng*, as they say (which I take to mean a bad attack of colic, or other acute disorder). When now I examined his feet, the frost was entirely gone from them, and the toes were not so black as before; nevertheless the feet, as well as the legs, were still very cold. About ten o'clock in the evening he was enabled to move his legs a little, and complained of pain in them and his feet. I again caused a cloth to be dipped in cold water and laid over them. He then ate a small quantity of egg-posset, and slept tolerably well during the night. On the following morning the feet were warm, and they no longer con-

tinued to give him pain. The toes, moreover, had resumed their natural colour, but they, as well as the feet, were very tender. The pulse was then strong, and he complained of great thirst. Had a lancet been at hand I should have opened a vein; but as this instrument, together with my travelling medicine chest, had been left behind at Wisby, owing to the captain's hurried departure, I was necessitated to omit the operation. I caused some gruel to be prepared for him, of which he drank freely. Towards noon the pulse was more quiet. He had a good motion, fell into a mild perspiration, eat a little, and slept afterwards.

'In the evening he caused himself to be led to a boat, as, without pain, he could not walk of himself. Well-contented, he now departed for his home; and thanked me, whom Heaven had been pleased to make the instrument of saving him from temporal, and it may be eternal, destruction.'



CHAPTER X.

SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING DISEASES.

CURE BY STEPPING OVER A GRAVE.—BY FOOD FROM ANOTHER'S LARDER.—IMAGINARY REMEDIES FOR COLIC, TOOTH-ACHE, EAR-ACHE, HOOPING-COUGH, LUMBAGO, STIES, BOILS, STENVRID, SCROFULA, THE HICCUPS, DROPSY, WARTS, CORNS, THE SCAB, EPILEPSY, HOARSENESS, SYPHILIS, THE AGUE (TROLL STORY), VIOLENT PAINS, SPITTING BLOOD.—EFFICACY OF CONSECRATED WAFERS.—SPITTING AND THE BLOOD OF MALEFACTORS.—THE CUCKOO.—ASSISTANCE IN PARTURITION.—AUGURIES.

REGARDING many of the ailments and maladies to which flesh is heir, and their cures, the Swedish peasant entertains some very singular notions and superstitions.

If, for instance, a person with an open sore passes over a grave, the wound will heal but slowly, if at all.

The sick will more rapidly recover if supplied with food from the larder of another than from that of their own. Hence women, when 'confined,' seldom partake of what is found in their own homes, but are indebted to neighbours for the needful nourishment.

Should a man, without assignable cause, have a sudden and severe attack of colic, it is believed to be caused by some wife in 'child-bed' having, through witchery, transferred to him the pains she herself is suffering, which pains he will have to endure until such time as the woman is

delivered, and when in the course of nature they will cease with her. But if the man buttons his breeches—her petticoat, should it be a female—around a chopping-block, which is supposed to represent the wife in labour, and shakes the block in like manner as a woman is then shaken, the colic will at once leave him.

The tooth-ache is cured by rubbing the diseased tooth until the gums bleed, with a horse-shoe nail, which must then be driven into a growing tree, and the pain will then be transferred to the latter; but if, at an after-period, any one should injure or cut down the tree in question, he will have the tooth-ache.

A stick cut from such a tree will answer the purpose equally well; but after the insertion of the nail, it must forthwith be restored to its place in the tree, and the severed parts so closely bound together that they will again unite.

It is further said of this ailment, that if on the first occasion of a person being troubled with it, some one—his mother in preference—gives him a smart blow on the mouth, it will never again return.

In the olden times—and the like remedies are, I believe, prescribed by the '*Troll Karl*,' or dealer in the black art, at the present day—mould from the church-yard, a slip of wood cut from a cross raised over a grave, or water that has lodged on a tombstone, were looked on as sovereign remedies, not only for the tooth-ache, but innumerable other complaints.

Should a person be suffering from the ear-ache, and another blows through an eagle-quill into his ear, the pain will cease. The scrapings of a wedding-ring, taken internally, will have the like good effect.

The remedy for the hooping-cough is to drink water either from out of a church-door key, usually of gigantic size, or water that drips from a mill-wheel, which revolves '*ansols*,' that is, in a contrary direction to the course of the sun; otherwise milk from out of a 'Queckhorn,' or the horn of a cow, or other animal, that has either been knocked off in combat, or from coming in contact with some hard substance, but that still adheres to the creature's head; for should it have fallen to the ground of itself, its value will be *nil*.

Lumbago is cured by some one, unobserved by the patient, giving him a smart blow with a broom on the part affected, whereby his back, consequent on the hurried movement the sudden shock causes him to make, comes all right again.

This malady is also cured by a woman that has had twins trampling on the back of the sick man, who in the while lies with his face to the ground. Whilst in this position he inquires three several times of the woman, 'Why dost thou trample on me?' To which she replies, 'Because I am better than thou art.' The patient then asks, 'Why art thou better than myself?' 'For the reason,' rejoins the woman, 'that I have borne under my breast two hearts, two pair of lungs, two livers, four ears, four hands, &c., and that thou hast not done.'

Wisps or sties on the eye-lid come, people believe, from a person having seen a chair, or stool, bottom upwards, without spitting on it. To cure this ailment one must, with an auger, bore three several holes in front of the sufferer, and spit through each.

Boils may be got rid of by rubbing some of the matter

that exudes from them on a copper coin, and afterwards casting the latter on the ground where four roads meet. The boils will then be transferred to the individual who picks up the coins.

This ailment may also be cured if the discharged matter be thrown into a stream that runs *north*.

'*Stenvrid*,' that is, a peculiar affection of the foot, is believed to be caused by a person, when barefooted, having stept on to a stone on which a snake has been killed; as also from his having placed his foot on a chair that is twirled round by another. It commences with an almost unbearable itching in the under part of the foot, which soon begins to ache violently. Afterwards the foot swells, and a boil appears, which is difficult to heal. This malady is cured if the patient turns round the itching foot (makes small circles with it 'ansols') three several times in front of a sharp stone.

The rickets is got rid of by the like means by which it came. Should the mother or the child have seen a murderer, a soldier, or some one who has killed a man, a puncture must be made in the finger next to the little finger, whence three drops of blood are to be taken and administered to the child. If it was a woman of loose character who communicated the disease to the child, the latter must drink out of the shoe of such an one. But if it be not known in what manner the child became infected, then a turf is to be taken up on a cross-road, and placed on its breast.

Should a person be troubled with hiccups, and that another says something to anger him, they will soon cease.

The dropsy is believed to arise from a person having

milk and water or brandy and water together, and to have afterwards drank it. So long as one's mother lives this disorder is said to be curable, but not afterwards.

Loathing of food is cured by giving a dog a bit of bread, and immediately taking it from him, and afterwards giving it to the sick man, who will at once recover his appetite.

It is further believed that if, when a person is afflicted with this malady, a slice of bread and butter is held for a while down the seat of the privy, and subsequently eaten by him, the administration of the delicate morsel will be attended with the like beneficial effects.

Warts may be got rid of if one allows water lodged on the latch of a gate to drop on to them; as also by tying a thread about each wart, which threads must then be buried in the earth, and by the time they have rotted away the warts will have dried up and disappeared. One may likewise be quit of these unseemly excrescenses if one drops a pea for each wart in a well, or if one rubs them against a tomb-stone.

Corns may, moreover, be got rid of if, when some one is speaking to the sufferer of the death of an individual, the following dialogue takes place between them:—'N is dead,' says the narrator of the casualty; to which the afflicted one replies, 'And so are also my corns.' This formula must be repeated three several times, when the cure is effected.

The scab is caused by a person having taken hold of a stake with which a serpent has been killed; but if the sufferer, on Midsummer-eve, first drinks at a sacrificial spring—of which more hereafter—and after bathing in its

waters, casts a coin or a needle into them, he will be relieved from the disagreeable and loathsome complaint.

Of epilepsy it is said, that if on the first occasion of a person having a fit, his clothes be immediately torn, he will never again be subject to a similar seizure. Should the fit, however, occur whilst he is in church, or upon the water, that disorder is held to be incurable.

If a person becomes suddenly hoarse, he is said to have seen a wolf. But if he, at the mouth of an oven, or at the opening of a '*Rofgraf*,' or cavity wherein turnips are preserved during the winter, shouts out loudly 'Give me my voice again?' it is believed his hoarseness will soon cease.

Should a person complain to another of some ailment, such as the tooth-ache, the ear-ache, blisters on the tongue, sore throat, heart-burn, or the like, the individual to whom these laments are addressed, must say, 'That's a lie,' when the ailment, whatever it may be, will at once disappear.

Regarding the small-pox the Swedish peasantry entertain some very singular notions—such at least was the case in the Wermeland Finn-Forests some years ago—for so far from admitting the disorder then prevalent to be that in question, as was undeniably the case, they roundly asserted 'it was neither more nor less than the "*Potato Disease*," which, having ceased thereabouts, had transferred itself from that valuable root to mankind.'

Another of their notions was that *Syphilis*, happily called by them '*François*,' or the French disease, for in Sweden we Britishers are no special favourites, and anything unusually bad too frequently gets an English appellation, 'is communicable by merely eating with the

same knife or spoon as the infected person.' An instance to this effect came under my own observation.

Olof, a respectable peasant, and an old companion of mine, when bear-shooting, together with several of his family, were martyrs to the horrid disease in question; and taking it into their heads that it had been imparted to them by an unfortunate tailor, then working in the house, in the way mentioned, for no criminality was alleged against the man, they bound him with cords and kept him without food for two whole days. It was their intention to send him to Malung, in Dalecarlia, a distance of some 20 to 30 miles, to answer for his misdeeds; but, fortunately for the poor fellow, some of his friends came to the rescue, and not only released him from durance, but subsequently instituted legal proceedings against his persecutors; these were, I understood, long pending, but how they terminated never came to my knowledge.

To escape the ague, one must be very careful, it is believed, to avoid touching any kind of food in the morning before washing one's hands, or at least dipping the tips of the fingers in water.

The following story, which by the common people is everywhere received as gospel, is said to have given rise to the superstition in question.

'There was once a rich peasant who had laboured all day in the forest, and on the approach of evening set off homewards. His road lay past a mountain where dwelt the "Troll," and when immediately opposite to it, he heard a voice within and his own name pronounced. Stopping to listen, the following commands, given in a shrill and harsh tone, reached his ears. "Both of you, my daughters, are

to proceed to the house of the man I have just named, where you are to remain for half a year. The wife is now preparing porridge for her husband's supper. On his reaching home, and beginning to eat, he will spill the first spoonful on the table. Thou, Martha, must then hop into the spoon and thus be conveyed into his stomach, where every good thing he swallows will be thine. To thee, Caroline, I give all kinds of eatables touched each morning by his maid-servant before wetting her hands; that will be thy fare. Adieu. This evening six months I expect you both back again.' All was now quiet in the mountain, and the peasant proceeded on his way home.

'As the "Troll" had predicted, the wife had made ready the porridge for her husband's supper, but before sitting down to the repast, he hastily stitched together a stout leathern bag. Afterwards, and when about to begin to eat, he purposely spilt the first spoonful of the porridge on the table, but on taking it up from thence he instead of putting it into his mouth, deposited it in the bag in question. Then securely tying up the mouth of the latter he hung it up against the wall of the room.

'The peasant then gave strict orders to his maid-servant always to wet her hands of a morning before touching any kind of provision, promising her at the same time a rich reward if she implicitly followed these his instructions for the next six months.

'On the following morning, when it was drawing on to ten o'clock, the leather bag mentioned began to shake violently and exhibit the usual symptoms of a severe ague-fit. The man on observing this, took his stick and gave the bag blow after blow as long as it continued to move.

The like symptoms and the like treatment were continued for six months, although the motions of the bag towards the end of that time gradually became weaker and weaker.

'For a while the servant girl, allured by the promised largess, strictly obeyed her master's injunctions, but being one day anxious to ascertain the state of some malt then drying in the oven, she, without first dipping her fingers in water, as was her custom, took up a couple of handfulls of the grain. Recollecting immediately afterwards, however, the omission she had been guilty of, she cast into the so-called "*Galt,*" or that part of the oven beyond the fire, the malt she held in her hands, and instead thereof, filled them by means not the most delicate.

'The six months having expired, the peasant repaired to the mountain spoken of, and listened attentively, when he heard the same voice as before say, "Welcome home, my children! but how haggard and wan you both appear, I scarcely know you again. Where hast thou been, Martha?" "Alas," replied the second voice in a complaining tone, "my lot has been a terrible one, for since I left home I have only had a single spoonful of porridge to eat, and what is worse, have been well thrashed every day." "And what hast thou been doing, Caroline? thou lookest more miserable and lean than even thy sister, and seemest, moreover, as good as burnt up." "That's true," responded the third voice, "my fate has been a still harder one, if possible, than Martha's; all that I have tasted in the six months has been two handfulls of dried malt, and that I was obliged to take from the farther end of a heated oven, in doing which I sweated most awfully."'

A sudden and severe pain in the body and limbs is

called a '*Troll-skott*,' or magical shot, that by a '*Troll-karl*,' or wizard, has been shot away from some one else. The patient cannot, therefore, be quit of his pains, except by resorting to the like means as those by which they were inflicted on him, namely, by putting the services of some magician of repute into requisition; but he must be careful that the commission is intrusted to a person that is well versed in all the secrets of the black art.

The 'Troll-skott' are of two kinds, viz., the water shot and the silver shot. In the former case, the 'Troll-karl' conjures up the figure of a man in a tub or pool of water, and with a gun or an arrow kills or wounds the phantom figure, according to his good pleasure. If it be a gun that he uses, the scrapings of nine wedding rings are introduced into the barrel.

To be '*Gast Krammad*,' literally, squeezed by the 'Gast,' or ghost, is when a man has been suddenly afflicted with blood-spitting, shivering, &c. The seizure is believed to have been caused by his having seen a ghost or other evil spirit, and at once communicated the circumstance to some one else, but which he ought not to have done until the following day. As a cure for this disorder—not an uncommon one with the peasantry—the patient must either take an ample dose of sulphur and gunpowder, or be smoked with these ingredients. Molten lead, if poured into a basin held above his head, or a live coal introduced between the shirt and skin, are, however, said to be equally efficacious.

'Consecrated wafers that are privily withdrawn from the mouth by the communicant during the administration of the Holy Sacrament,' so we are told by Parson Odman, 'are be-

lieved to be possessed of healing powers in an extraordinary degree, and are given to the patients—whether man or beast—for various disorders.' 'Or it may be,' the worthy man goes on to say, 'are set up as targets, or rammed down the barrel of the gun, to cause the latter to shoot straight.' 'Mass wine was in former times,' the parson tells us, 'looked on as equally efficacious.'

This notion as to the efficacy of the 'consecrated wafer' would seem to be very firmly implanted in the minds of the peasantry. M. Afselius, who is now living, informs us, indeed, that a woman under his own ministration confessed to him that, on the first occasion of her 'communicating,' she, in the way spoken of, gained possession of a wafer, and introduced it into the mouth of a toad, which she afterwards permitted the ants to devour; and this under the idea that in its place she should find a 'hook' that would serve all manner of sorceric purposes. 'But from that day forward,' the reverend gentleman goes on to say, 'she had such constant epileptic fits as to be unable again to come to the Lord's Supper, and eventually died in great want and distress.'

Spitting, as shown a few pages back, is looked on by the common people as a certain preventative of various maladies, especially such as it is imagined are inflictions of the 'Troll.' It is also believed to be a preservative against evils of all kinds, and, as a consequence, the filthy practice is had recourse to on innumerable occasions.

If, for example, a man comes to a cross-road, he spits; if a sudden tempest or whirlwind arises, he spits; if he passes a spot where a horse has rolled, he spits; if by mistake his hat has been exchanged for that of another,

he, on recovering his own, and before putting it on his head, spits on the lining; if the first person he meets in the morning after leaving home be an old woman—a most unlucky omen—he spits; if a horse on being divested of its harness shakes itself, he spits; and when bridling a steed, he spits through the head gear, giving the animal's forelock, at the same time, three several pulls; and before going to rest he always spits in the bed, believing that should the person who previously slept in it have laboured under some contagious disorder, he will not be infected, &c. Were he to confine himself to these harmless practices no great harm would be done; but not unfrequently he deposits his saliva in both the beer barrel and the kneading trough.

To spit is, moreover, a sure means of keeping the powers of darkness at a distance.

If, for instance, a person expectorates when he sees a ghost, or other evil spirit, it will not harm him.

And if, when he is passing over a river or brook, his horse is desirous of quenching its thirst, he spits in the stream, 'Necken,' the ruler of the floods, as said, will then have no power over the animal whilst it is drinking.

Innumerable instances to the above effect have come under my own personal notice.

Once, when on a journey, the horse suddenly fell from a trot into a walk, and neither the whip, which the driver applied freely, nor his voice—usually the most efficacious of the two—would induce the animal to mend his pace; and as it was a powerful brute, and quite fresh, the man was fairly puzzled. At length, however, he came to the sage conclusion that the steed was bewitched. 'Its spirit is stolen from it,' he suddenly exclaimed, and

jumping out of the cart, he proceeded to the horse's head, and spat three several times—the orthodox number—behind its ears; a certain means, as he devoutly believed, of driving away the Evil One, whom he imagined, as he afterwards told me, to be posted in the road immediately in front of our vehicle. By dint, however, of a somewhat more cogent argument than saliva, the charm was at length broken, and our steed started off at a pace almost equalling that of the famous American trotter.

Of the origin of this, the spitting superstition, I am in ignorance; probably, as with that of the 'Evil Eye,' it may date back to remote antiquity. That the Swedes, however, have directly to thank the monks for it, is not improbable. In the administration of baptism in the Church of Rome, there are employed, it is said, several exorcisms. In reciting one of these the officiating priest touches with a little spittle the ears and nostrils of the person to be baptized, saying, '*Ephphatha,*' that is, 'Be thou opened into an odour of sweetness; but be *thou* put to flight, O devil, for the judgment of God is at hand.' Upon this a well-known Roman Catholic writer observes: 'This ceremony is taken from the example of Jesus Christ, who when they had brought to him one that was deaf and dumb, taking him aside from the multitude, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue, and said to him Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.'—Hay, Sincere Christian, vol. i. p. 414.

Regarding human blood there are many superstitions. It is said, for example, that when phlebotomy is had recourse to, the blood taken from the patient must be buried in the ground, or otherwise it might be bewitched; as

also, that if a dog drink of it, he will eat up himself.

The blood of a malefactor who has suffered the last penalty of the law—which in Sweden is always by decapitation—is regarded by the common people as a sovereign remedy for a variety of disorders.

'I have been present at either six or seven executions,' said Dr Willman to me; 'and at one which took place at Dahlby, in Scania, no fewer than some 70 individuals—all suffering from ailments of one kind or another—had on the preceding day asked and obtained from the criminal about to die permission to drink of his blood!—a needful proceeding to render the loathsome draught efficacious. As, after the head is chopped off,' my friend went on to say, 'the arteries are quickly drained of gore, those privileged to partake of the latter are usually permitted to stand within the "cordon" formed by soldiers and others around the place of execution; the instant, therefore, the fatal axe falls, they all run up to the beheading-block with cups, saucers, spoons, &c., to catch the warm fluid as it gurgles from out of the headless trunk, which they forthwith pour down their throats! The patients then cast the empty vessels behind them, when the hands of each are seized hold of by two of the bystanders, by whom they are run backwards for some little distance, when the cure is supposed to be effected.'

The 'call-note' of certain birds at particular seasons, and under peculiar circumstances, is looked on as ominous of the fate and fortunes of people, and auguries innumerable are drawn therefrom.

'When that of the cuckoo is heard for the first time in the spring,' says Parson Odman, 'the common people are

in great dread, being apprehensive they will be bewitched; and in April and May they therefore never leave home fasting. If a girl, widow, or youth be bewitched, he or she, as the case may be, will not be married that year; and if old and wedded people are bewitched, they must expect misfortunes or illness.'

It is further said that if the cuckoo 'calls' from a leafless tree, many illegitimate children will be born that year; and if late in the autumn, that dear times are to be expected.

We are, moreover, told that should two cuckoos '*gala*,' as the cry of that bird is called, in the same tree, and that a person can, unperceived, creep up to the tree and embrace it, he will become possessed of such extraordinary power, that if he places his arms around the waist of a woman in the act of parturition, but who has difficulty in giving birth to her offspring, she will immediately be relieved of her burden.

The like capability of aiding the sufferer, I may remark in passing, is obtained by a man who, seeing a toad and a snake engaged in mortal fight, succeeds in separating the combatants, so that both survive.

They believe, besides, that if one mimics the cry of the cuckoo, it will vomit its heart's blood, and hence the red spots one not unfrequently sees on the leaves of trees.

When auguries are drawn from the 'call-note' of this bird, much depends on the quarter from whence they proceed. North cuckoo implies sorrow; south cuckoo, death; east cuckoo, consolation; and west cuckoo, the best of all.

Should a person be desirous of taking counsel of the

cuckoo, he must say or sing to the bird certain words each time it calls, as follows :—

Grey cuckoo	(reply from grove)	'Cuckoo.'
Say me then	„	'Cuckoo.'
Perched on a bough	„	'Cuckoo.'
Truly and certainly	„	'Cuckoo.'
How many years	„	'Cuckoo.'
Am I to live?	„	'Cuckoo.'
or		
Remain unmarried?	„	'Cuckoo.'

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTMAS.

WHY NAMED JUL. — JUL IN THE OLDEN TIME. — FREJS BOAR. — BRAGE GOBLET. — THE BOAR SEHRIMNER. — JUL FRID. — JUL SUPERSEDED BY CHRISTMAS.—PREPARATIONS FOR JUL.—THE JUL CROSS.—JUL PINES.—THE POOR AND THE SPARROWS.—DECORATION OF ROOM. — JUL HALM, OR RYE STRAW. — VISIT TO THE COW-HOUSE, STABLE, WATCH-DOG, BATH-HOUSE.—THE JUL FIRE, CANDLES, GIFTS, BANQUET.—ANGELS' ALE. — TOMTE GUBBE, OR ELF.—OTHER SUPERSTITIONS.

SUCH of the Christian festivals—and they are many—as are acknowledged by the Swedish National Church, as also other festivals called '*Folk Fester*,' or people's feasts—in general dating back to remote ages—are more or less celebrated by the peasantry.

This is more especially the case with '*Jul*,' * or

* The origin of the name of '*Jul*' has given rise to much controversy amongst the learned. There are those who think it is derived from the old northern word '*öl*,' or ale, which with them signified a feast; as, for example, '*Barns öl*,' the entertainment given on the occasion of a christening; '*Graf öl*,' of a funeral, &c. But others are of opinion that it comes from '*Njol*,'—meaning, in the ancient languages, night or darkness—or rather, perhaps, absence of the sun; whilst there are those who contend it is only a corruption of '*Hjul*,' or wheel, and consequently implies the circle performed by the sun—the first six months preceding '*Jul*' with the days shortening, the other six months with the days lengthening—and hence when the two met it was called '*Jul-mät*'—literally, wheel-meeting.

The new year with the ancient Northmen commenced, it should be re-

Christmas; but before making mention of the manner in which it is kept in Sweden at the present day, it may be desirable to say a few words as to the origin of the festival, and the way in which it was celebrated by the old Northmen.

The historical Odin, on his advent in Scandinavia—which was about 100 years before the time of our Saviour—ordained, amongst other religious rites, that three several great sacrifices (*blot*) should annually be made to the gods. The first, '*Jul-blot*' (chiefly commemorative of the sun being then in the ascendant), at the commencement of the new year. The second, '*Disa-blot*,' in honour of the goddess Disa—more properly '*Goa*,' or '*Göja*'—the protectress of the fruits of the earth, in midwinter, or about the 2nd of February; and the third, in the spring, to Victory.

But '*Jul-blot*' was the greatest of these festivals, and lasted, according to some, to the 13th of January; but to others, to the end of that month. During this time the warriors—if not engaged in the performance of their religious duties—devoted themselves chiefly to the pleasures of the table, to athletic and military exercises, and to games and pastimes of various kinds; hence it was commonly called the play-month. The rich then gave great banquets; and even the less wealthy, who singly were unable to bear the expense, contrived, by combining

marked, with the longest night—the 21st December—which was called '*Moders Natt*'—or Mother's night, as springing from the bosom. And what with us in England, when interchanging the compliments of the season, is a 'happy new year,' was with them a good '*Jul-möt*.' They began the year with the winter, which they looked on as older than the summer. According to their mythology, darkness and cold preceded light and warmth; and the '*Jotnar*,' or Giants, existed prior to the '*Asar*,' or Gods.

together, to feast and enjoy themselves at this joyous season.

The chief of their banquets at this time was on '*Jul-Afton*,' or the day preceding the festival of 'Jul,' which day, as also the four succeeding ones, was considered so holy that people refrained from all occupations other than such as were requisite for the preparation of the sacrifices and the solemn feasts. The boar, specially dedicated to the god Frey (the giver of rain and sunshine), for the reason, as it is supposed, that by turning up the soil with its tusks, it taught man to plough, was brought whole to the banqueting table, on which occasion it was customary for kings and chieftains to lay their hands on the animal's back, and whilst quaffing mead or other potent liquor out of a so-called Brage goblet,* solemnly to vow they would perform some notable feat of arms prior to the ensuing 'Jul;' and though such promise might have been made when the

* Brage, son of Odin and Frigga, is, according to the Scandinavian mythology, the god of wisdom, eloquence, and poetry; '*Mimer's Well*' is accessible to himself and Odin alone. He is represented as an old man, with a wrinkled brow, and a beard reaching down to his girdle. He has in his keeping and at his disposal the costly '*Skaldermjod*,' or poetical mead, which the dwarfs make out of Qvasen's blood; this he distributes to a few select '*Scalds*,' or poets, who are called Brage's men, and as he daily quaffs of it himself, every word that he utters is therefore full of instruction, and abounds with wit and the most profound wisdom. Brage is master of the ceremonies, so to say, to Odin, and when a warrior arrives at the palace, he accosts him thus: 'Welcome to Walhall! enter into the joys of the *Einheriar*, and quaff the magnificent 'Asarnjödet,' or mead of the gods. His wife was Iduna.

Brage was so highly reverenced by the ancient Scandinavians that an oath sworn by him and his goblet could not by possibility be broken. Hence, when the obsequies of a king or regent were celebrated, the priest brought first from the temple, and presented to his successor prior to his ascending the vacant throne, the 'Brages Bagare' (and a similar one was formerly found in every family, though only used on special occasions), filled with mead, which, after he had made some solemn promise as to the future government of the country, he drained to the bottom at a single draught.

head was reeling, it was nevertheless always most religiously kept, whether the result was death or victory.

The boar, it is be remarked, was looked on by the old Northmen as the greatest of delicacies. We read in the 'Sagas,' indeed, that at their great feasts it was always a standing dish. Even in 'Walhall,' the seventh heaven of the sea-kings, the boar, '*Sehrimner*,' is represented in the Scandinavian mythology as affording a daily feast to the elect of Odin; and a most wonderful creature it must have been, for though the warriors, after their daily combats on the plains of '*Idavallen*,' satisfied their hunger with rashers cut from its portly sides, the flesh grew again during the night, and at the repast on the following evening 'Sehrimner' was always forthcoming, in as good a plight as ever.

When, however, Christianity was introduced into Sweden, now, as said, upwards of one thousand years ago, the monks, not thinking it advisable to interfere more than was absolutely necessary with the customs and prejudices of the people, adopted the pious fraud of ingrafting Christian festivals on several heathen ones, and amongst others that of Christmas on 'Jul-blot,' which they had the less difficulty in effecting, as there were only a few days' difference between the two. Hence 'Jul' in Sweden is not, as with us, called Christmas, but still retains its ancient appellation.

But for a long time afterwards heathenish and monkish superstitions were mixed up, and the northern warriors at their 'banquets' during 'Jul,' and at other times, continued to slaughter and feast on their horses, to drink deeply, and live freely as before.

'Jul' in those days was not only a great religious festival, but a privileged season, there being a law called '*Jul-freden*,' which not only protected a man's person from violence, but from civil arrest. This extended from 'Jul-Afton,' on the day preceding 'Jul,' to Saint Knut's day, the 13th of January. Its duration varied, nevertheless, in the several provinces (each having, to a certain extent, its own laws) into which the country was then divided; and its termination, which was proclaimed with much ceremony, is marked on the Run-tablets with a 'Lur,' or wooden trumpet, similar to those used by the shepherds.

'Jul' at the present day, as in the olden time, is a great festival with the Swedish peasantry, and a special reverence would seem to be held by them for the season.

The three days of the solstice, or those immediately preceding Christmas, for instance, are looked upon as very portentous; for within them, agreeably to a belief that has existed for ages, there is a second of time when not only the sun itself, but everything moveable in the creation, becomes stationary; and as a consequence, 'if at this particular moment, which no one can foretell, a person should be occupied in any way, that which he is then about is sure to go wrong.'

During the continuance of Christmas much of the hospitality of the old Northmen, together with their customs and superstitions, still prevail. 'No niggard is so stingy,' says Parson Gasslander, 'as not to make proper provision for its being celebrated and conducted with the greatest solemnity and propriety; and no beggar so poor and miserable as to be unable to procure for himself all that is requisite to afford good cheer.'

Long prior to the arrival of this joyous season, indeed, preparations are made. Whilst the grain is still in sheaf, for instance, certain of the sheaves are selected from which 'Jul-ale' is to be brewed, and 'Jul-bread' baked.

On the morning of 'Jul-Afton' the peasant, his sons, and men-servants, prepare the needful supply of 'Jul-Ved,' or such fire-wood as is perfectly dry and abounds with resin. This, after it has been cut into even and smooth billets, is placed somewhat aslant under the 'long bench' that extends the whole length of the apartment, partly thereby to throw light on what would otherwise be dark, and partly to show that the peasant has an ample supply of Christmas fuel. But this readily ignitible wood must remain untouched until Christmas-tide is over, when it is used morning and evening to illumine the room.

On this morning, also, the cattle must be let out from the 'Ladugård,' or cow-house, to water at an earlier hour than usual and driven in again at noon; 'otherwise the crops will not be housed until very late in the autumn.' And as no kind of work must be done on 'Christmas day' itself, so much forage as will suffice for the cattle till that succeeding it must then be bound up into small bundles with wisps of straw.

In parts of the country it is likewise customary on Christmas eve to make with chalk the sign of the cross over the door of the cow-house and other outbuildings, as also over that of the dwelling-house itself, it being believed that such crosses will have the effect of scaring away from the premises the 'Tröll' and other evil spirits.

For the like purpose they in places raise on a snow-heap, or on the last load of fire-wood brought from the

forest, a so-called 'Jul cross,' the upper part of which is with axe or knife so sliced into shavings, so to say, as in degree to resemble foliage.

'*Jul granar*,' young pines, as said, divested of bark and branches to near the crown, which is at times cut into a somewhat fantastic shape, are, moreover, as at a wedding, raised round and about the dwelling; and when these trees are feathered with snow, as is usually the case at Christmas, they have a rather singular, if not picturesque, appearance.

The poor are not forgotten by the peasant on 'Jul-Afton,' bread, candles, &c., being distributed by him amongst them, that they may be enabled to pass the festival with some degree of comfort.

Neither does he, on this evening, forget the inferior orders of the creation; for, just before the sun goes down it is the beautiful custom, of even the poorest amongst them, to expose on the top of a high pole raised near to the house, or on the house-top itself, a small sheaf of unthrashed grain for the benefit of the sparrows and other small birds which, at this inclement season, must often be in a state approaching to starvation. 'All creatures,' they say, 'should have cause to rejoice on the anniversary of Christ coming into the world.'

Whilst the peasant is thus occupied out-of-doors, the wife and maid-servants are busy within-doors in scouring the floor and furniture; everything, in short, that is scourable in the house, and afterwards in decorating the room in the best manner they are able.

For this purpose large white sheets, or other pieces of linen, are affixed to the ceiling; and from about the centre

JUL GRANAR, OR CHRISTMAS PINES.

p. 168.

of the latter, immediately above the table, is suspended a sort of crown, or coronet, of straw, whereto are attached shreds of green, red, and blue cloth, &c. The gable end of the room facing the table and the walls are hung with cloths, on which are painted, or otherwise depicted, Scriptural subjects, such as the birth of our Saviour, the three wise men, the marriage in Cana, &c. The floor, again, is strewed with sprigs of juniper or spruce-pine hacked into small bits, which, to my notions, emit a far from disagreeable odour; or otherwise with '*Jul halm,*' or long rye-straw, of which, as said, a portion is always set apart for this season, which is spread equally over the whole floor. This custom is believed by the common people to be a legacy of the monks, commemorative of the birth of our Saviour in a stable, but in reality it dates back to the times of heathenism. Of its origin, however, the learned are altogether in the dark. Some say that as Jul was the turning-point of the year, the introduction of straw into their houses was symbolical of returning vegetation; others, that its origin is to be traced to the great sacrificial feasts of the ancient Scandinavians, when the temples were strewed with straw, so that those who came from a distance to worship might have a resting-place at night; whilst there are those, again, who are uncharitable enough to surmise that, as the old warriors during 'Jul' and other of their festivals were apt to get very tipsy, they littered the floor with straw, so that in the event of tumbling off their seats, they might have a soft bed on which to fall.

But be this as it may, 'Jul halm' at the present day possesses, in the eyes of the peasantry, very many virtues.

They believe, for example, 'that if some of it be scattered over an unfruitful field, it will afterwards prove productive.'

The best clothes of the wife and daughters, and those of the servant girls, as also those belonging to the peasant himself, together with their finest linen, are hung up in regular order on a long pole near the wall, 'it being believed that by the "Jul fire" shining on them they will thereafter be free from the attacks of the moth.' All the copper and pewter cooking utensils, after being scoured beautifully bright, are, moreover, neatly arranged on the several shelves in the room.

These needful preparations made, the female portion of the family, with the exception of the mistress of the house, who is busily occupied with domestic affairs within-doors, repair to the cow-house for the purpose of treating the cattle to the best of forage that the homestead affords; and as each cow receives her allotted portion they say to her, 'This is Christmas eve, my little one.' The animals are afterwards given a mess, consisting of all the different kinds of viands they themselves have previously partaken of; and each one, moreover, is provided with a new '*Bese*,' meaning, I fancy, the collar or yoke by which the beast is attached to the crib, because if the creature could speak, it would say, 'I had rather on "Jul-Afton" have a serpent about my neck than an old one.'

On the first entrance of the family party into the building in question, it should be observed, they carefully mark the position the cattle are in. Should they be lying down 'it is a token that the next harvest will be an abundant one;' but if, on the contrary, they be standing up, 'a scanty crop is to be looked for.' And prior to the party

leaving the building they place in the several cribs a few hairs, if such be procurable, plucked from the hide of a newly-slaughtered bear, under the belief that, if this precaution be taken, the cattle, during the ensuing summer, will not be molested by those ferocious brutes.

From the cow-house they proceed to the stable, when the horses are given the choicest hay, &c.; and *ale* at a later hour in the evening, 'that they may be the more mettlesome on the following morning when on the way to matins.'

The other animals on the premises are likewise well looked after, and treated to good things; the poultry, for their share, being supplied with a dish of '*Jul gröt*,' or stir-about, composed of wheaten flour, or rice, prepared with milk.

The watch-dog, which is for the most part chained to the kennel both day and night, is on this evening, moreover, allowed to go at large, 'it being a pity to allow the poor fellow to remain bound and miserable whilst every other creature is free and happy.'

Subsequently, the family repair to the bath-house—always a detached building—where by rights every one ought daily or weekly to make his ablutions, but which, excepting on this evening, is seldom the case during the whole year.

All these needful duties performed, they, thinking it a shame so soon to make an end of 'Christmas eve,' return to the house, which by this time has been put in 'apple-pie' order, that they may enjoy themselves within-doors.

When it is dark the '*Jul-brasse*,' or fire, consisting of dry and readily-ignitible logs of wood, is lighted; and the

room is further illumined by several '*Jul-Ljus*,' or candles of an unusually large size, and one or more of which is provided with three, or it may be four, branches.

The origin of this peculiar form of candle seems unknown in Sweden. M. Rudbeck, the celebrated archæologist, imagines it to be symbolical of the returning sun, and that the shape of a tree with three branches represents nature, the three of winter's still ruling elements, earth, air, and water; but others are of opinion that the custom was introduced by the monks.

The company having refreshed themselves with coffee, or the like, an interchange of Christmas gifts, called '*Jul Klappar*,' takes place between them, or it may be such are sent to one or the other by an absent friend or acquaintance. But with the peasantry, I believe, this exchange of presents on Christmas eve is not carried to any very great extent, and is, moreover, conducted in a very quiet sort of way.

Not so, however, with the so-called 'better classes,' for with them the distribution of the gifts in question is quite an imposing affair. Two uncouth-looking figures, masked and habited in the most grotesque fashion—one the '*Jul Gubbe*,' or Christmas old man; the other the *Jul Käring*,' or Christmas old woman—enter the apartment. The former has a bell in his hand, which he rings to announce their coming; the latter a large open basket, in which is deposited a number of sealed packets. These are delivered by her to the persons to whom they are addressed, and by whom they are immediately opened, that their contents may be gazed on and admired by the company. The names of the donors of the gifts are not specified, but in

general a pretty shrewd guess is entertained as to the quarter from whence they come. In many instances, a scrip of poetry is attached to the packet, the reading of which frequently occasions no little merriment.

When the basket is emptied of its contents, the old gentleman and lady in question leave the room for a while, but presently return again with a fresh supply of presents; and thus the distribution goes on for an hour or two, to the no small edification and delight of the company, or, at least, of the younger portion of it.

The interchange of '*Jul Klappar*' completed, they amuse themselves as best they may with music and the dance, as also with various games and pastimes, of which some account will be found in the next chapter.

At ten or eleven o'clock the family and guests sit down to the evening repast, prior to which, however, 'grace' is always said. If the parties are wealthy, all kind of good things are placed on the table, amongst which a pig's-head, or 'pig' in some shape, and 'Lut-fisk,' the nature of which was explained some few pages back, are always to be seen. A large oblong loaf of bread, called a '*Jul Galt*,' or boar, in remembrance, no doubt, of the boar formerly sacrificed to the god Frej, and one or more piles of '*Jul Bröd*, that is, large and thick circular cakes of rye-bread, baked specially for this joyous season, also grace the board; but both the boar and the bread in question must remain there untouched until the conclusion of the festival, when, as will hereafter be shown, they are converted to many superstitious purposes. The peasant's silver coins, and such silver cups, spoons, &c., as he may possess, are likewise placed on the table, 'it being believed that the light emanating

from the "Jul-fire" will cause them to be lucky and increase.'

Ale and brandy are always found in abundance at the festive board on this and other evenings during Jul; and that they enjoy themselves on these occasions is pretty evident from the burthen of an old song which commences as follows :—

'The peasant law and practice too,
Every night and all night through,
Is to drink and drown all sorrow,
Let betide what will to-morrow.'

The repast, which always concludes with a psalm, in which all the company join, being over, the dance, &c., is resumed for a while, when they all retire to rest.

Prior thereto, however, a tankard of '*Angla öl*,' or Angels' ale, is set on the banqueting table for the use of the angels.

Neither do they forget the '*Tomte Gubbe*,' or old man of the homestead, answering, I fancy, to our 'Little Puck.' The 'Tomter' are believed to be the souls of the slaves of the ancient Scandinavians. Whilst their masters were engaged in buccaneering expeditions, these men guarded and looked after the homestead. Hence the industrious habits attributed to them; and as they died idolaters, it is believed they will follow their present occupations until Doomsday. As elsewhere said, the 'Tomte Gubbe' is a friendly elf, and, to insure a continuance of his good offices, drinkables and eatables—particularly '*Jul Gröt*,' or Christmas stir-about—as also a little tobacco, and one or more diminutive articles of clothing, are placed in the oven or on the barn-floor—both of which he is supposed to visit nightly—for the use of the little gentleman.

In stature the 'Tomte Gubbe' is a mere child, but in appearance, as seen above, a little old man. He is usually clad in a gray jacket, of home-woven woollen stuff, knee breeches, and clumsy shoes, and wears a red night-cap.

He always dwells with people, and it is believed that those with whom he takes up his abode are sure to prosper in the world; as a consequence he is welcome everywhere. The greatest cleanliness and thriftiness must, however, prevail in the establishment, or otherwise he is sure to take his departure; nothing must be defiled, nothing wasted. He himself is very laborious, and during the summer and autumnal months is often seen bearing an ear of corn or a straw, that he has picked up on the premises, to its proper place. His pace at such times is very slow, and at every few steps he stops to take breath, as if labouring under the heaviest burthen. A peasant, observing his 'Tomte Gubbe' thus lightly laden, laughed, we are told, somewhat rudely, and said to him, 'Of what use is it that thou bringest me this trifle?' The question gave great offence to the little old man, and very shortly afterwards he betook himself elsewhere. His late host, who was previously in good circumstances, quickly fell into poverty and misery, whereas the poor squatter, to whose homestead the Tomte removed, soon became rich and flourishing.

To protect the interests of his patron, the eye of the 'Tomte Gubbe' is everywhere, more especially in seeing that the animals on the premises are well treated. Innumerable stories to this effect are on record, of which the following, related to me by Major Falk, of the Swedish army, is a fair specimen.

'I once lived as groom at a place where the "Tomter"

had their abode,' so said a soldier to that gentleman. 'One night, when standing on the steps of the building where I slept, which was at some little distance from the stable, I was suddenly borne, as if by a whirlwind, into the latter. Here, to my wonderment and consternation, I found myself face to face with the "Tomte Gubbe," who pointed with his finger to a particular horse, which I then recollected having neglected to water. At once, therefore, I led the animal to a neighbouring pool, and afterwards back again to his stall. The "Tomte Gubbe," who had followed me all the time, as a warning to me to be more careful in future, then gave me two such severe boxes on the ear that they tingled again; and the next instant I found myself on the steps of my own lodgings, from which I had been so miraculously taken a few minutes before. I was so pale and agitated that my comrade inquired "what ailed me?" but I was unable to make him any reply. The next morning, however, I recollected what had happened, and to the truth of which I still firmly adhere.'

As may be inferred from the foregoing, the 'Tomte Gubbe' is a personage of some note in Sweden. When a tree is felled, for instance, it is said, 'The man holds the axe, but the "Tomte" cuts it down.' When, again, the horses are well-groomed, and in good condition, all the credit goes to the 'little old man.' The charcoal-burner, moreover, has a great respect for him, and when he takes up his abode in the '*Kol-Mila*,' or charcoal-pit, all goes well with the man; for should he chance to fall asleep and neglect the fires, 'the "Tomte" rouses him from his slumbers.'

Other superstitions are also prevalent on 'Jul night.' All the family must then sleep under the same roof, and the children in a so-called 'Syskon sang' (see Chap. II., p. 29), formed of 'Jul Halm,' 'because it was on a bed of straw that the child Jesus celebrated his advent in Bethlehem.'

The shoes of all must be laid together at bed-time, 'that there may be unanimity in the family.'

And should any one place his shoes upright against the wall, and that in the morning they are found to have fallen to the ground, 'he will surely be a corpse within the year.'

On 'Jul night' the candles, as also the fire on the hearth, must be kept burning until the morning; for should any one of the former, or the fire, go out of itself, or be extinguished by accident, 'some one of the family will soon cease to exist.'

The fire in the bath-house must also be kept up throughout the night, for should it die out, 'the "Troll" will come there to bathe.'

It is furthermore believed 'that if on this night a candle stands by itself, and is left undisturbed, the flame will separate from the wick, and begin to dance, as it were, at the same hour on which our Saviour was born.'

The remains of the 'Jul candles' must be carefully preserved until Christmas again comes round, 'because they possess great medicinal virtues; as, for instance, in the cure of chapped hands, feet, lips, &c.; as also when applied to the sore teats of cows,' &c.

It is said, moreover, that if an unmarried man on 'Jul night' hangs up his shirt in the barn, its position on the following morning will indicate what will happen to him

during the following year. 'Should the arms of the shirt then lie across the breast, the owner will die;' if one arm be stretched out he will be married; if the lower part be drawn up he will be guilty of adultery; but should it be found in the same state as when left on the preceding evening, no change will take place in his condition during the period in question.

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTMAS AMUSEMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.—MUSIC, OR BALLADS.—DANCES.—SACRIFICIAL DANCE.—LOVE-TOKENS.—CHRISTMAS DOLL.—PUSH JOB.—JUL CLUB.—CHRISTMAS OLD WOMAN.—JUL GOAT.—JUL BOAR.—RUPERT THE SOLDIER.—'SITTING GAMES.'—DIVINING.

THE Swedish peasantry are great lovers of both vocal and instrumental music, and many of the men play well on the violin, &c.

Their '*Folk visor*,' or people's ballads, the number of which is legion, for every province has its own, and which many of the young girls sing very sweetly, are said to exceed in beauty those of every other country; but, like the Scotch and Irish national ballads, they have generally a somewhat melancholy tendency.

The following literal translation of one sung to an air from the forest districts of Norrland and Iemptland, gives a good idea of their nature:—

'How proud and how fair she comes tripping along;
Now sadly, now gaily she singeth her song:
But the stars they shine o'er the woodlands.

'Her lustrous eyes she lifts to the blue sky above,
While tear-drops are trembling like leaves in the grove,
But the stars they shine o'er the woodlands.

'Whom seek'st thou? Thy warm heart is beating in vain,
Thou poor, pale-faced maiden, he comes not again:
But the stars they shine o'er the woodlands.'

Of the dance, as of music, the Swedish peasantry are passionately fond; and the people's dances are very numerous. It is, indeed, said that upwards of 40 are known in Sweden. The dance most common, however, is a kind of polska.

Ödman, who lived about a hundred years back, when speaking of the customs followed in his time during Christmas-tide at a parsonage in the province of Smâland, says:—'They had many old dances, and danced not only to tunes, but to songs ("*Jul visor*"), to which action was joined. The dances in general consisted of ring-dances, in which certain persons took part alternately. One dance represented a courtship, with refusal and acceptance. The men, on their part, made desperate love to the girls, who, at first, were coy, and would not listen to them. After a time, however, they relented, and took compassion on the suppliants, and the dance ended with a wedding; so that at length the whole company consisted of married couples. Many of the girls stood several times as bride without the least jealousy being exhibited on the part of any one.

'To the melody of *Folie d'Espagne* they danced a very clever and agreeable "ring-dance," in such wise that the men constantly advanced from the right, and the women from the left; and every time they met they took each other round the waist, and made a half turn. This undeviating order, but apparent disorder, had a very pleasing effect.

'They had also several pantomimic dances; one, for instance, representing the art of weaving. The company were drawn up in two divisions, and the several pairs, in turn, crossed each other; now with the hands uplifted,

and now with the head sunk under the hands of the opposite pairs. This represented the crossing of the warp and woof. During the dance the children ran between each pair, thereby representing the shuttle.'

'Many customs and games common to Christmas-tide,' says M. Afselius, 'are derived from the sacrifices which, in heathen times, were made to propitiate the gods. Those to the memory of Odin were celebrated with games and dances, during which both men and animals were immolated. And in certain parts of the country, especially in Götaland, where Odin is more borne in mind than elsewhere, they have still games that represent the sacrificial dances.

'Several youths, whose faces are blackened, and persons disguised, are the chief performers. One of them represents the creature about to be immolated. The knife, and other needful appurtenances, are brought forward, and it is put to death under music and song. A woman, hideously attired, and with a blackened face, who represents the priestess of the temple, officiates at the sacrifice. This over, she becomes the partner of the victim in the dance that follows, which for some time is kept up with great animation, and many changes of posture; but at its conclusion with gesticulations so gross as to give reason to believe that the priestess and the high priest were accustomed to terminate their sacrificial dances in the like manner.'

The so-called '*Jul Lekar*,' or games with which the peasantry amuse themselves on Christmas eve and other evenings during the holidays, are numerous.

One is for the young girls to make up diminutive wisps of the 'Jul Halm,' wherewith the floor is strewed,

which they cast upwards, and as many of them as lodge in the rafters 'will be the number of their lovers during the festival.'

At times, also, the good man of the house resorts to the like expedient, though with a different object. Seating himself on a log, his eldest son, or his eldest daughter, should he have no boy, or the mother herself, if the children be not big enough, places a wisp of the straw in question on his knee; from this he draws a single straw at a time, and throws them up to the ceiling, and 'as many as remain there will be the sheaves of rye he will have to thrash during the ensuing autumn.'

Ta Jul Dockan, that is, to take up the Christmas doll, is another of their games at this time. A figure—somewhat in the form of a child—is made up of '*Jul Halm,*' and placed upright on the floor. One of the company then lies down on his back, with his head towards the doll, and whilst in this position raises both legs over his head—his body thus assuming in degree the shape of a hoop—and with his feet endeavours to lay hold of the figure and lift it from the ground. Should he not succeed in the attempt, as is not unfrequently the case, he is not a little laughed at, it being supposed—and not without some show of reason—that he had previously indulged rather too freely in the pleasures of the table.

In some places a shoe is substituted for the doll, which the man, whilst in the posture mentioned, takes up with his feet and throws from him. The position in which the shoe falls is carefully marked. Should it point towards the door, 'it is believed some one of the family will shortly be carried as a corpse out of the house.'

'*Pjato Job*' (called also '*Peta Job*')—that is, to push or shove *Job*, is also a favourite game during Christmas, more especially in the more northern of the Swedish provinces.

Two men, with their legs wide apart—straddling, in short—stand back to back. In front of one of them is '*Job*,' a little figure of straw. The other man has a stick in his hand, which he passes between his own legs and those of his opponent; and after he has inquired, 'Is *Job* at home?' and has received a reply in the affirmative, and that an amusing dialogue has taken place between the men, he endeavours with his stick to upset the little straw figure in question. This catastrophe his opponent uses his best efforts to prevent by turning aside with his stick—he also being provided with one—the enemy's weapon. The battle is thus often fiercely contested; and, from the ludicrous attitude of the combatants, great amusement is consequently afforded to the spectators.

Another of their Christmas games is called '*Jul Club*.' From the ceiling is suspended by a line a heavy club that hangs within a few inches of the ground. A man lies on his back on the floor in such manner that his breast is under the club. A tankard of beer is placed in one of his hands; and with the other hand it is his province, whilst drinking the liquor, to keep the overhanging club moving in even circles about his head, so that it does not touch him. Should he fail in doing this he is condemned, as a punishment, to drain to the last drop a second tankard of beer. No great infliction, however, I take it, to such thirsty souls as the generality of the Swedish peasantry.

The 'Christmas old woman,' again, plays no unim-

portant part at this season. A youth represents her, and is so huddled up in an infinity of petticoats, &c., as to be nearly as broad as long, and consequently to appear much shorter than he really is. Thus accoutred, the old lady keeps marching up and down the apartment, to the great amusement of everybody; and when she bows low to one or other of the company, it would seem as if her 'bustle,' which is of enormous dimensions, would capsize the individual who stands immediately behind her.

The '*Jul Goat*' is another 'guy,' that on Christmas eve and other evenings during the Christmas holidays affords much amusement to the company.

A youth represents the '*Jul Goat.*' He is hidden from view by a coverlet made of skins, the forepart of which is so twisted together as to form a sort of head, whilst the tail consists of a birch-broom. As with our Punch and Judy, both head and tail are worked by strings, or rather sticks, held by the youth, and it is on the dexterity with which these are handled that everything depends. Thus equipped, the monster is with great ceremony ushered into the room, about which it wanders, to the great enjoyment of the old and the terror of the young.

In parts of the country the '*Jul Goat*' is provided with formidable horns, and is led into the apartment by two men, who sing as follows :—

'Good even, good even, both maiden and man,
We're bringing the "Jul Goat" as fast as we can.

'We found him hard by the mountain path,
A shaking his head in direful wrath.

'They laid on the "Jul Goat" a mantle of red;
They did so because that the buck eat bread.'

The men now pretend to slaughter the goat, which falls to the ground, when they continue:—

'The one of us threatened, the other struck hard;
The "Jul Goat" is felled and stretched on the sward.

'They laid on the "Jul Goat" a mantle of blue;
They did so because that gray was his hue.

'A mantle like snow on the "Jul Goat" they laid;
They did so to shroud him because he was dead.

'They laid on the goat a bright mantle of yellow,
For Christmas was then and the buck a good fellow.

'But hundreds of marks it will cost, I divine,
Ere the "Jul Goat" is salted in pickle and brine.

'Then Goaty starts up, shakes his beard at them all,
And strikes with his forehead against the fifth wall.'

Whilst the last verse is being sung the buck raises himself from the ground, and jumping and running about the room, causes much merriment and confusion amongst the company.

At times, however, the '*Jul Boar*'—in remembrance, no doubt, of the boar that in the olden times was sacrificed to the god Frey, takes the place of the '*Jul Buck.*'

An individual clad in skins, and holding cross-wise in his mouth a small bunch of short straws, sharpened at the ends in imitation of the bristles of a hog, seats himself upon a stool or chair; and as he pretends to be very deaf, the fun of the thing is, that whilst the bystanders whisper in his ear, he, when opportunity offers, makes a dig at their faces with the straws in question, thus giving them to understand he is not to be trifled with.

Occasionally, moreover, a sort of child's comedy is enacted, and this more especially on Christmas eve. *Rupert Kneckt,* or Rupert the Soldier, a much-dreaded

personage, with whom disobedient children have long been threatened, is the first to enter the apartment. He is hideously attired, has a conical-shaped paper cap on his head, and carries a rod in his hand. He knows beforehand all the misdeeds of the child, and after carefully recapitulating them, admonishes and threatens the latter with punishment. When he is about to carry away the frightened child, the mild and beneficent *Kinkeljes*, who is clad in white, makes his appearance. At first he is wroth with the child for its many naughtinesses, and proposes to take his departure, but at length becomes appeased, and on its promising to be very good in future, takes it under his protection, drives 'Rupert Kneckt' out of the room, and makes the repentant child various presents.

'Rupert Kneckt,' of this Bible drama, we are told, is in reality no other than the Evil One; but is believed to have obtained his peculiar traditional qualities from a certain English nobleman who, as the 'Baneman' of St Thomas of Canterbury, became in the representation a sort of bugbear; and 'Kinkeljes' is merely a corrupt pronunciation of '*das Kindchen Jesus*,' the little child Jesus.

Besides the pastimes mentioned, and others of a somewhat similar kind too numerous to recapitulate, they have what are not inappropriately called 'sitting games,' such as cards, the guessing of riddles, charades, 'forfeits,' &c., in which those indulge who are less inclined to take part in more active amusements.

On Christmas eve, moreover, and on other evenings during the holidays, such of the company as are desirous of ascertaining their fate, empty the white of an egg into a glass of clear water, which they examine on the following

morning, and from the form the egg has then assumed they draw conclusions as to what will happen to them during the ensuing year.

For the like purpose they pour molten lead into a bucket of water. The several particles, which have assumed all imaginable shapes, are afterwards carefully examined, and pronounced by the company to liken, as the case may be, bridal coronets, cradles, babies in swaddling clothes, black mould (funerals), whence prognostications are drawn of the future.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTMAS LEGENDS.

ON JUL NIGHT EVIL SPIRITS ABROAD.—HOW HERNE ULF BEHEADED A TROLL.—HOW A PAGE CARRIED OFF A TROLL HORN AND GOBLET, AND DIED.—THE SONG OF THE KNIGHT AND THE TROLL MAIDEN. THE *ÄRS GÅNG* OF PILGRIMAGE IN QUEST OF THE SUPERNATURAL. —HOW THE DEAD CELEBRATE DIVINE SERVICE, AND HOW A LADY AND HER MAID SAW THEM.

On 'Jul night' no one must be absent from home; for even should a person not meet with the evil spirits, he will see more on that night than on other nights. It is then more especially that the 'Troll' roam abroad. On heaths and in desert places witches may be seen riding on wolves, swine, broomsticks, &c., when on the way to their merry-meetings,—commonly held in mountain grottos, or under huge boulders, which on these occasions would seem to be supported by pillars,—where they dance, sing, and carouse throughout the livelong night.

'The knight Herne Ulf,' said Peter Jöns Angermanni, Bishop of Wexio, when holding a funeral discourse, published in 1620, over one of that nobleman's descendants, 'resided at Ed, in the parish of Waxtorp, Småland. He never neglected to attend matins on Christ-

mas day. One particular "Jul night" happened to be remarkably clear and bright, so that on awakening he—although it was then very early—imagined it to be dawn, and that he had overslept himself. Thinking it high time, therefore, he set out for Church. He ordered his horse to be saddled, and leaving the groom to rouse the other servants and follow after, he set forth alone for the sacred edifice.

'When, however, he had proceeded nearly half the way, he saw on a little knoll to the right of the road a number of diminutive people singing and dancing, and seemingly in the act of celebrating a wedding. He reined up his horse, and for a while looked on at their pastimes. Presently, however, one of the company, a beautiful woman, stepped forward and presented to him a drinking-horn, and requested he would partake of its contents. The knight took the proffered horn in his left hand, and making pretence to quaff from it, he threw the liquor it contained behind him. The "Troll," seeing the manœuvre, cast an angry and defiant scowl at him, on which he drew his sword and, in the name of Jesus, chopped off her head. Then concealing the horn about his person, he pursued his way. Immediately afterwards, however, there arose so terrible a tempest, accompanied by fearful howlings and other hideous noises, that he with difficulty succeeded in reaching the church.

'When the service was over, the knight requested the clergyman and the congregation to accompany him back to the scene of his morning's adventure, since called "*Troll-Kullen*," or the Troll-hill, where was found the body of the "Troll" he had decapitated, with the head lying beside it.'

The horn in question, which was of three hundred different colours, was presented by the knight to the cathedral church of Wexio, where it remained in good preservation until the year 1570, when the Danes burnt the town, on which occasion it was either carried to Denmark or lost. The King of Sweden, probably Eric XI., surnamed '*Läspe*,' or the Lisper, when informed of the above-mentioned occurrence, commanded that thenceforward the knight should drop the name of Ulf, and assume that of 'Trolle,' as also that he should quarter in his armorial bearings the head and trunk of the 'Troll,' as seen by the whole of the congregation, which quartering is still borne by the Trolle family, one of note in Sweden at the present day. His Majesty further commanded that the incident recorded should be depicted on the walls of Wexio church, where the painting still remains in a state of tolerable preservation.

Again, 'when the church of Åhus, in Scania, was in course of erection,' so runs another popular legend, 'the "Troll" who dwelt in the neighbouring hills were highly incensed. Amongst them, however, were two giantesses, who undertook to destroy the sacred edifice. For this purpose they took up two enormous boulders, and after placing them in the bands in which their hair was bound, slung them at the structure. From some cause or other these missiles went wide of the mark, and fell at the spot where they now lie, which is at no great distance from the high road. The largest of the boulders, called "*Maggelsten*," is some 30 feet in length, 24 in breadth, and 20 in height; the other, "*Tippelsten*," is somewhat smaller. When, however, the church was completed, the "Troll," angered

beyond measure at the sound of the vesper bell, left their mountain fastnesses and took up their abode under the boulders in question, where they continue to hold their midnight orgies.

'At no great distance from these mystic stones is the mansion of Ljungby, where, about the year 1490, resided a widow lady named Cissela Ulfstand. One "Jul night" intelligence was brought her that the sound of music and rejoicing were heard at "Maggelsten," and on the promise of a liberal reward, the boldest of her pages volunteered to proceed there, and ascertain what freaks the "Troll" were playing. Arming himself *cap-à-pie*, he therefore mounted his charger, and rode forth on the adventurous expedition.

'But he had not proceeded very far when he met a servant girl belonging to the Ljungby household, who some little time previously had most mysteriously disappeared, and of whom no intelligence had since been gained. She told him that, having been led by curiosity to approach "Maggelsten," she had been made prisoner by the "Troll," and was still retained by them in captivity; and she added, "that unless on his guard against their crafty wiles, he also would certainly share the like fate."

'Nothing daunted at this intelligence, the page continued on his way, and when near to the boulders spoken of, he saw that they were uplifted and rested on pillars, and that, by the light of many tapers, numbers of the "Troll" were dancing under and about them. On observing the youth, a lovely woman of the company courteously accosted him, and requested "he would blow a blast with the horn she presented to him with the one hand, and drink to the health of their 'Mountain king' out of a goblet she held

up to him with the other." The page took hold of both, but remembering the counsel given him by the maiden, he threw over his shoulder the contents of the goblet, when, securing the latter as well as the horn about his person, he on the instant wheeled round his horse, and digging the spurs into its side, set off homewards at full speed.

'The "Troll" pursued the page with threats of dire vengeance: but as he rode straight across country, which to them was "holy ground," whilst they kept to the high road, they were unable to overtake him. He reached the mansion, however, in the very nick of time; for hardly was the drawbridge crossed when his enemies appeared, and with horrid threats and menaces demanded that the horn and goblet should be restored to them. But the Lady Cissela, to whom the youth had delivered his trophies, was inexorable, and the "Troll" were therefore necessitated to return empty-handed to the scene of their revels.

'The spoils which the page had so gallantly won,' so the legend further relates, 'brought no luck to the poor fellow, for two days afterwards he himself was a corpse; and his charger, owing to a portion of the liquor from the poisoned chalice having fallen on its flanks, thereby causing both skin and flesh to rot away, only survived his master by a few hours. Neither did the trophies bring good fortune to the family: for the mansion of Ljungby was shortly afterwards consumed by fire on two several occasions, and no very great time elapsed before the Ulfstand race had disappeared from the face of the earth.'

We are further told, that if the Christian man should incautiously quaff of the flowing goblet so courteously proffered by the 'Troll' when engaged in their midnight

revels, he will become oblivious of the past, and contented with everything he finds in their abode.

A young and gallant knight is induced, by the beauty and blandishments of a mountain damsel, to enter the charmed grotto, when she asks him,

'Where art thou born, and where art thou bred,
And where was thy court dress fashionèd?'

THE KNIGHT.

'In the king's palace I was born and bred,
And there was my court dress fashionèd.

'And there is my father, and there is my mother,
And there is my sister, and there my brother.

'And there have I corn-fields and pastures green,
And there is my bridal couch, I ween.

'And there is my true love, my only joy,
With her will I live, and with her will I die.'

With her snow-white hand the maiden then presents him with a golden drinking-horn, out of which he quaffs, when she further inquires,

'Where wert thou born, and wert thou bred,
And where was thy court dress fashionèd?'

THE KNIGHT.

'Oh, here was I born, and here was I bred,
And here was my court dress fashionèd.'

THE MAIDEN.

'Say, where do thy father and mother dwell,
And where is the maiden thou lovest so well?'

THE KNIGHT.

'Here do my father and mother dwell,
And here is the maiden I love so well.'

The 'Troll' now claim him as their own; and should he ever return to his family and friends, he is as one dead, and his intellect is gone.

'The first draught he took of that horn so dread,
Both heaven and earth from his memory fled.
'The second draught from that horn he took,
He forgot both God and His holy Book.
'And at his third draught from the horn, I wot,
His own loved maiden the knight forgot.'

On 'Jul night,' as also one or two other nights, it has from time immemorial been the custom of people in parts of Sweden to go, which is called '*Ärs gäng*,' or make a yearly pilgrimage, whereby one becomes instructed in many hidden things, and made acquainted with events that will occur during the ensuing year.

Certain preparations are however needful for those who go on these mystical journeys. Some secrete themselves for three days previously in a dark cellar, so as to be shut out altogether from the light of heaven. Others retire at an early hour of the preceding morning to some out-of-the-way place, such as a hay-loft, where they bury themselves in the hay, that they may neither see nor hear any living creature; and here they remain, in silence and fasting, until after sundown; whilst there are those who think it sufficient if they rigidly abstain from food on the day before commencing their wanderings. During this period of probation a man ought not to see fire, but should this have happened, he must strike a light with flint and steel, whereby the evil that would otherwise have ensued will be obviated.

He that goes on this pilgrimage must on no account divulge his intention, or say a word to any one on leaving the house; neither must he look back when once on the road, return the salutations of those he meets, reply when spoken to, laugh, nor be affrighted should he see or hear

anything uncommon; but pursue his way sedately, and in the most profound silence.

'Once it happened,' says Dr Wieselgren, Dean of Gothenborg, 'that a peasant in the province of Bleking when going "Ärs gäng," drank from a spring, and incautiously exclaimed to his companion, "The water is now wine," whereon a voice was heard from the deeps, "And I possess thine eyes," of which the unfortunate wight was at once deprived. I should add, the belief is general that at a certain hour on Christmas night the running water is turned into wine, and that it was while awaiting this event that the exclamation in question was made.'

People are generally alone when making the mystic pilgrimages in question; sometimes, however, two, or it may be three, though unwillingly, keep company; but in this case the middlemost man must carry in his hand a '*Midsommai goast*," or bouquet composed of nine different kinds of flowers, that were gathered on Midsummer's eve, of which more hereafter.

The wanderer commonly departs from home a little before midnight, and should return prior to matins. He directs his steps in the first instance to a churchyard, and sometimes visits as many as three of these depositories of the dead. If a pestilence be near at hand, the grave-diggers are there at work throughout the whole night, and funeral processions are seen moving about in every direction.

Should he come to a house, he has only to knock gently at the door and inquire, 'Is any person to die here?' and if there be some one within who is doomed, he himself will reply in the affirmative. But should not the grim

tyrant purpose visiting the dwelling that year, 'No' is the rejoinder, and this happens whether people be awake or asleep.

During his peregrinations this night many wonderful things will come under his observation. If the coming harvest is to be an abundant one, he will hear the sound of the sickle and the scythe when they come in contact with stones, or the like, in the grass, and will see diminutive men bearing great sheaves of grain from the fields; mice drawing wains with heavy loads of hay; and ale barrels conveyed along the road. But if, on the contrary, the crops are to prove deficient, he will see but few people in the fields, and small sheaves of corn borne from thence; empty waggons drawn by oxen, and the reapers sitting sorrowful by the wayside.

Should war be immanent, the woodman's axe resounds everywhere in the forests, armed men ride to and fro on the road, and the sorrowful cry of the plover is heard in the distance.

Fires and floods are seen by him near to places where they are about to occur.

He that goes 'Ărs gäng' on 'Jul night' sees and hears many other strange things, because the 'Troll' are then abroad; but they will not harm him. All that he has to dread is the '*Glo-sou*' (the glowering-eyed Sow), which is as big as a snow-plough,* and which with bristles erect, and foam-

* This implement consists of two broad and tolerably thick planks, forming nearly the two sides of a triangle, which are kept in their proper position by tranverse bars. On all the principal roads of Sweden, and on many of the minor ones also, these ploughs are kept at stated distances; and when there is a heavy fall of snow the peasants in the surrounding districts are obliged to furnish horses to remove it. If the road be narrow, the plough is usually of a small size, and one or two horses in that case are com-

ing at the mouth, rushes across the road, roaring and growling in the while so fearfully, that the very earth quakes again beneath his tread. The monster will endeavour to pass between the legs of the wanderer, and should it succeed in the attempt, unless the man bears next to his skin a sapling of the mountain ash, self-grafted on another tree, he is sure to be ripped up. The wayfarer when thus attacked must carefully avoid laughing, or he will become wry-mouthed.

The efficacy attributed to the mountain ash is explained by the following legend :—'Once when Thor was on his way to "*Jotunheim,*" to war with the giants,' so we read in the Scandinavian mythology, 'and whilst in the act of crossing a mountain torrent, there suddenly came down so great a rush of water—caused by a tempest the "Troll" had raised—that the god was in great danger of perishing in the billows. On the opposite bank, however, grew a "*Rönn,*" or mountain ash, of which he was fortunate enough to catch hold, and was thereby enabled to draw himself to land. This tree was in consequence called "*Thor's hjelp,*" or Thor's rescue, or aid, and ever afterwards magical powers were attributed to it by the old Northerners. In the construction of their war-galleys, for instance, a portion of its wood was always introduced as a charm against the "*Sjö Rä,*" or sea "Troll," who were believed to rule the storm; and a mere sapling of it borne in the hand was considered to be a sure protection against all kinds of "Trolldom."' Even at the present day the mountain ash is believed to be

monly sufficient to work it; but if the road should be wide, and the plough in consequence of a larger size, then several horses may be requisite. I have been surprised that these ploughs are not made use of in England in the event of a deep fall of snow, for they are constructed in an hour or two, and are worked with every facility.

possessed of supernatural powers, and is therefore in high repute for many purposes.

Should a person have gone 'Ărs găng' for seven successive years, he will on the last night of the last year meet a man on horseback, from whose mouth proceed flames of fire, and who holds between his teeth a Runic tablet; and if he be agile and courageous enough to rush on the cavalier, and snatch from him the latter, he will become so 'Klok,' or wise, as to be able to answer any question put to him, as also to see eighteen feet under-ground.

And should he continue his peregrinations two years longer, or for nine years altogether, and comes late at night to a churchyard, he will there see many '*Dwärgar*,' or dwarfs, all of whom have '*Dwärg Hattar*,'* or charmed hats, on their heads. These diminutive beings engage in play amongst themselves, and resort to many apish tricks to make the wayfarer laugh, which he must most carefully avoid, for should he give way to mirth, all his previous labours will have been in vain, and he must go 'Ărs găng' for other nine years. Should all the buffoonery of the dwarfs have no effect, however, they will endeavour, by horrid visions, to scare him away; but if these fail also, they themselves will not have the power to retire from the spot before one of them has left with him his 'charmed hat.' They do not depart, nevertheless, much before matins, and not until after resorting to every possible means in their power to weary out the man who bears the Runic tablet, and with whom in the while they have wrestled, saying,

* These are of two kinds: one is called '*Duldehatt*,' which renders the wearer *invisible*; the other, "*Haldehatt*,' on the contrary, makes *visible* to him who has it on what to others is invisible. Some good stories are told of the hats in question, but are too long for insertion here.

'Thou shalt not have a "Hatt" until, either by force or agility, thou hast taken it from one of us.'

He who has thus won the Runic tablet, and the 'Dwärg Hatt,' becomes a great soothsayer, and all hidden things are revealed to him, without its being needful for him again to go 'Ärs gäng.'

But the most singular and appalling superstition relating to 'Jul night' is the belief—one pretty generally entertained—that the dead then rise from the grave, and after revisiting their former homes, repair to 'God's House,' where they hold divine service amongst themselves. 'Hence the dread people entertain of being abroad on this night; and it is very certain that in many places they keep up the games usual at Christmas to the very latest hour, that they may avoid seeing the dreaded apparitions in question.'

'A noble lady named Bäät, residing at the mansion of Engsö, in Westmanland, who had been twice married,' so runs one of many popular legends to the like effect, 'happening to awake one "Jul night," at a very early hour, observed lights burning in the neighbouring church. In the full belief that matins had already commenced, she arose and dressed herself, and, together with her waiting-woman, proceeded to the sacred edifice. But she had hardly entered it, when, to her horror and dismay, she perceived that all the pews were occupied by individuals who had long been in their graves, the greater part of whom she herself recognized.

'Amongst the ghostly company was a deceased housekeeper of hers, who came quietly up to her and said,—"Wherefore are the living amongst the dead?" After-

wards the apparition counselled her former mistress to leave the church forthwith; as also that when she passed out of the portal, near to which both of her late husbands were standing, not to go nearer to the one than the other, and not to look behind her, as in that case some misfortune would certainly befall her.

'The lady acted on the advice thus kindly given, and returned in safety to her home. Not so, however, her poor waiting-woman; for she, being in ignorance of the friendly warning her mistress had received, unhappily looked back whilst leaving the sacred edifice, on which she was instantly "*Borttagen,*" or carried away by the "Troll," uttering in the while shrieks so piercing as to be heard throughout all the surrounding country.'

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

CHRISTMAS DAY.—CHURCH SERVICE.—QUIET FAMILY LIFE.—ST STEPHEN'S DAY.—STAFFAN, THE SWEDISH ST STEPHEN.—HIS LABOURS, MARTYRDOM, GRAVE, WORSHIP.—STAFFAN'S '*SKEDE*,' OR RACE, AND BALLAD.—NEW YEAR'S EVE.—SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING THE NEW MOON AND NEW YEAR'S DAY.—TWELFTH DAY.—BETHLEHEM STAR.—STAR BOYS.—TAKING A WIFE.—ST KNUT'S DAY.

On Christmas day every one makes a point of being present at matins, which commence very early in the morning; in places, indeed, several hours before daybreak. In the rural districts the inhabitants of a hamlet, when proceeding to church, often club together, and bear before them a flambeau of some kind of resinous wood, the effect of which in a hilly country, when bright lights are seen converging from all points of the compass towards the sacred edifice, is very picturesque and striking. On reaching the immediate vicinity of the church the flambeaux are cast into a general heap, when there is presently a glorious bonfire, which illumines not only the exterior of that structure, but all the surrounding country.

The inside of the church is brilliantly lighted up, for independently of the numerous wax candles on the altar,

the pulpit, and in the chandeliers in the middle aisle, every pew is provided with several candles, which at times are found by the occupants themselves, but at others are supplied by the parish. Formerly the floor was strewn with straw, but of late years the custom has been wholly or in great part laid aside; and at the present day spruce-pine, or juniper twigs, chopped into small pieces, is substituted in its stead.

The service on this day is conducted in a manner very similar to that used on ordinary occasions; but the costume of the clergyman,—or rather clergymen, for more than one usually officiate,—strikes one with a little wonderment, they being wrapped up in long and loose flowing white robes with a large gilt cross at the back, presenting figures, in short, that it would do the hearts of our Ritualists good to look on.'

On returning from church one cannot but notice the haste with which a portion, at least, of the congregation, whether equestrians or pedestrians, hasten homewards; at times, indeed, it would almost seem to be a race. Some say this is in remembrance of St Staffan, of whom presently; others, that this anxiety to head each other arises from the belief 'that he who *first* reaches his homestead will be the *first* to house his crops in the autumn;' whilst others again will have it, 'their only object is the desire to partake of the good dinner,—of which pig, in some shape, forms a standing dish,—that awaits them.'

But once at home each family lives in quietness and, so to say, within itself, neither paying nor receiving visits, and passes the remainder of the day in perusing religious books, singing psalms, &c. Once in a time, it is true,

people do get somewhat inebriated; but so far as my observation goes, this is rather the exception than the rule.

When they do get drunk on Christmas day, however, it is occasionally in a somewhat curious manner. A lady friend of mine told me she once had a serving man—a constant attendant at matins—who always went sober to church and always returned tipsy, which was the more unaccountable, as there were good reasons for knowing that he had no opportunity of obtaining liquor whilst absent from home. At length, however, the mystery was cleared up. The fellow had, it appeared, a stout walking-stick that he always carried on these occasions, which was *hollowed* out. This he was accustomed to fill with alcohol prior to proceeding to church; and whilst leaning on it, as was his habit, and apparently listening attentively to the discourse of the worthy clergyman, he, by means of a quill inserted in the head of the stick, was quietly and demurely imbibing its contents.

St Stephen's day, the 26th December, that succeeding Christmas day, is also kept by the Swedish Church; but both by the peasants and others—after divine service, at least—it is rather looked on as one for recreation and pastime than as a Sunday.

Though this festival was instituted in honour of St Stephen the martyr, it is fully as much celebrated in Sweden in remembrance of another, St Staffan, or St Stephen, commonly called the Helsingland apostle, who was amongst the first who preached Christianity in the country, and who, like his namesake, sealed his faith with his blood.

Of all the Swedish martyrs St Staffan is the most celebrated in song and story. He was a courageous and un-

daunted man, and in the true sense of the word a Christian warrior. In the old Upsala temple, where idolatry, with all its abominations, reigned supreme, Staffan stept boldly forward amongst the priests officiating in 'Odin's gilded Fane,' and freely denounced their heathenish faith and the shameful deceptions practised on the people, and many were thereby converted to the truth; but he was at length seized, scourged, and cast into prison. Through the instrumentality of Providence, however, who reserved him for greater things, he one night managed to escape from thence, and took refuge in Helsingland. In this province, so richly gifted by nature, he was the first successful teacher of the gospel; and here he won both an undying name and a martyr's crown.

St Staffan was exactly the man for the Helsinglanders, a bold and fearless race; and being young and vigorous, and untiring in his labours, he soon succeeded in collecting congregations everywhere. A saying is still common amongst the people, that once every week he visited them all, and proclaimed God's word. In the performance of this duty he followed the course of the sun; so that in the morning he rode from Nordala, where he dwelt, passed the night at Arbrå, and from thence continued his journey to Järfsö and Ljusdal, Sundhede, and Nordanstigen, and returned home within the above-named time.

Helsingland was in those days, as at present, celebrated for its good horses. Staffan had a great love for these animals, understood their treatment, and had always five with him wherever he went. When one was wearied he mounted another, and in this manner traversed the country.

The larger portion of the Helsinglanders, who are sensible people, were soon converted to Christianity; but the heathen who remained, and who had the law on their side, were powerful enough to raise a persecution against Staffan when he, somewhat prematurely, was daring enough to destroy their temples and images. He must again fly; but in the forest of 'Ödmords,' near to the river Tynnebro, he was overtaken by his enemies and stoned to death.

To ascertain the will of Odin as to where he should be buried, they tied his corpse to the back of an unbroken colt, which was then set at liberty, with the resolve that the spot where the animal halted should be that of sepulture. It happened, however, that the fiery steed stayed not its furious course until near to Norrala, where, as said, the poor missionary, whilst alive, resided.

St Staffan was here interred by his friends; and agreeably to his express directions—he having previously predicted all that would happen to him—a church was erected on the spot. Even at the present day a little chapel, constructed of logs, is there maintained, which is called by the people '*Hille Bror Staffan's Stupa*,' that is, this is the grave of the holy Brother Staffan.

For a long time after the martyr's death, his friends and the Christians in the country were accustomed to meet at this his place of burial, which to them was looked on as holy, where they prayed together, and strengthened each other in faith and love. But when Christianity at a subsequent period began to lose its original simplicity and purity, the monks, profiting by the reverence the people entertained for the spot, seduced them by pretended miracles and prodigies to make offerings, and seek cures for

diseased animals, especially horses; as also to worship St Staffan, who, however, was never canonized, as their patron saint.

The circumstances above narrated regarding the 'Northern Apostle' were the origin of the parish seal of Arbrä, which to this day bears a horse for its shield. Hence also the custom, still retained throughout a great part of Sweden, of celebrating, on one and the same day, the memory of the first Stephen, who, for his acknowledgment of Christ, was stoned at Jerusalem, and that of the modern Stephen, the name and manner of death of both having been the same.

On St Stephen's day, or rather after divine service, the 'Jul' festivities may be said fairly to commence, and they are kept up, with but little intermission, until the conclusion of the holidays.

St Staffan being looked on as the patron of horses, many customs in reference to those animals, as well as to the Saint himself, are still maintained, not only in Helsingland—the chief scene of the missionary's labours—but in several other parts of Sweden.

At an early hour of the morning, for instance, the peasant cleans out the stable of another; feeds, waters, and rubs down his horses; and this oftentimes at a distant hamlet, or it may be parish, to the great astonishment of their owner, with whom the man subsequently sits down amicably to breakfast.

On this morning also people treat their horses to the ale that was left on the preceding evening, and not unfrequently open a vein in their necks, as well for the purpose

of protecting them from sicknesses as to insure their good condition.

Another of their customs is for the youths to ride what is called '*Staffan's-Skede,*' a sort of race commemorative of the rapid progresses the patron saint was accustomed to make in Helsingland. Those who take part in the pastime are called '*Staffan's Men,*' and are all mounted. They arrange themselves in a sort of procession, representing the missionary and his followers, and in imitation of the former, always set out long before dawn. The cavalcade proceeds from village to village, and from house to house, and at the door of each sing some stanzas of a popular ballad, called '*Staffan's Visa,*' which evinces the same fresh northern spirit as Staffan himself, and runs as follows,—

'Staffan was a stable man,
"Step high, my noble steed."
His horses five he watered,
St Staffan grant God speed.

'As yet no daylight doth appear,
But high above us, bright and clear,
Shine the stars.'

In return for their ballad 'Staffan's Men' expect to be treated with ale; but should they have long to wait, they sing as under:—

'If you keep us longer here,
"My noble steed, step out."
Our beards will soon be filled with frost.

'No daylight can we spy,
But the star of morn shines bright.'

Formerly, to ride 'Staffan's-Skede' was not confined, I should add, to the custom in question; for after divine

service on St Stephen's day, the race used to be run from the church itself, but the practice is now for the most part laid aside.

On the evening of St Stephen's day, the inhabitants of the village assemble either at one or other of their own homes, or at a so-called '*Lek Stuga*,' literally play-room, or house, that is supported by subscription, where they amuse themselves with similar games and pastimes to those spoken of in the twelfth chapter, and others common to the season, as also with music and the dance.

Prior to the commencement of the latter,—such, at least, used to be the pleasing custom some years ago in the more wooded parts of Östergötland,—four young maidens clad in white, with tinsel coronets on their heads, and various other ornaments, enter the apartment. Two of them carry refreshments for the company, whilst the other two bear between them a tub filled with soil, in which is planted a so-called '*Jul Buske*,' that is, the upper part of a young spruce-pine, to the branches of which are appended numerous lighted tapers, parti-coloured ribands, &c. This tub is placed on the floor in the middle of the room, when the four maidens in question form a ring around it, and sing the following lines :—

'To greet our host and hostess here,
Behold a burning bush appear.
'Tis borne aloft by maidens twain,
Belonging to our village train.
Sans root, with crown and branches green,
Thus growing now this bush is seen.
May God our host and hostess bless,
And send them every happiness.'

The 31st of December, or New Year's eve, is in a few

p. 208.

THE JUL BUSKE, OR CHRISTMAS TREE.

places called '*Doppare-Dagen*,' or 'Dipping Day,' whilst in most other parts of the country it is Christmas eve that bears this appellation.

The family and guests then assemble at dinner-time in the kitchen, which is swept and garnished for the occasion; when, instead of sitting down to a regular meal, each one dips his 'Jul-bread' into an immense pan, containing pig in some shape, that is boiling over the fire, a dish considered the more palatable from the quantity of fat floating on the surface. This banquet is greatly enjoyed by every one, more especially by the younger portion of the company, who, long before its arrival, may frequently be heard to inquire, 'How long is it to 'Doppare-Dagen.'

The custom is believed to be very ancient, and to be in commemoration of the boar offered up to the god Frey, at this season of the year. The priests then, as at other of their great sacrificial feasts, boiled the flesh of the immolated victims in immense caldrons, prior to distribution amongst the people.

This, the last day of the year, was formerly celebrated in Sweden with much pomp and solemnity. At the present day, however, it is not kept otherwise than by family banquets, and these are pretty much confined to the so-called 'better classes,' which are followed up by various amusements until the clock strikes 12, when each one drains a bumper to the New Year.

There are many superstitions relating to New Year's eve. If, for example, the new moon be then visible, a person desirous of ascertaining his fate during the coming year goes out into the open air with a psalm-book in one hand, a piece of bread in the other, and a silver coin

in his mouth; and whilst looking up to the luminary he allows the book to open, so to say, of itself. Should this be at a death psalm, he will die that year, but if at a bridal psalm, he will be married.

This method of divining is very ancient. During the Middle Ages they used for the purpose a MS., the leaves of which were alternately white and red, comprising chiefly Bible matter. Such a MS., containing the four Evangelists, is now in the Royal Museum at Stockholm.

The new moon (*Nyet*) of the new year has from time immemorial attracted the special attention of the common people, and numerous are the auguries drawn from it. They say, for instance, 'that as many days as this new moon remains obscured by clouds, so many days will elapse before the grain in the ground comes up.'

Again, should the evening star, Venus, set before 'Nyet,' the harvest will be a productive one, because the master (moon) follows after the servant (the star), and beseeches the latter to remain in his service; which request, however, the man refuses, for the reason that in plenteous times he can subsist without servitude. But should 'Nyet,' on the contrary, set first, and the planet afterwards, there will be a scarcity, and the man then petitions his master to retain him in his place.

Until a late period, indeed, people have been known, with eyes upturned to 'Nyet,' to repeat the following words, which doubtless are very old.

'Welcome, new King,
Welcome, Lord!
With Corn and Fruit,
With Pork and Beef,
With good Corn in the Autumn.

It is, moreover, said that whatever the business or occupation of a man may be when he first sees 'Nyet,' 'such will chiefly occupy his attention throughout the coming year.'

New Year's day is a holiday with the Swedish Church, but not otherwise observed, I believe, than as a Sunday.

It is an old belief, 'that whatever happens on that day will happen the whole year through.'

If, for example, a person then receives money or presents, 'he will be in constant receipt of one or the other during the year.' But if, on the contrary, he is compelled to pay away money, 'his outlay in that while will be great.'

If, again, a man meets with troubles or annoyances on New Year's day, he will not only be subjected to heavy expenses, but overwhelmed with distresses of all kinds, the year through.

From the state of the weather on this day they also draw auguries. Should the heavens be then red, 'evils—such as war and pestilence—hang over the land;' and should it blow hard, 'the next harvest will be an average one;' but if the sun shines brightly, 'dear times are to be expected.'

Another of their methods of divining on New Year's day is to place several vessels, filled with water, on the table, each representing one of the kinds of grain most grown in the district; and if, on the following morning, air-bubbles are found at the brim of one or other of the glasses, 'the crop of grain that glass indicates will be abundant the following year.'

Trettonde Dagen, the 13th day after Jul (12th day with us), which falls on the 6th of January, is kept by the

Swedish Church, though simply, I believe, as a Sunday.

This day is also called the holy Three Kings' day (formerly '*Epiphania Domini*'), and was instituted to celebrate the uprising of the 'Star in the East,' over the heathen, of whom the three kings, Casper, Melchior, and Balthasar, were the first to come from distant lands to worship the Saviour.

In early Catholic times this was a very great festival, and particularly distinguished by a solemnity belonging to the so-called 'Mysteries.' Three priests, attired in royal robes, and followed by numerous attendants bearing presents, previously collected, went in procession to the church under the supposed guidance of 'Bethlehem's Star,' which they professed to see, and towards which one of them pointed with his staff as he entered the building. Here and above the altar was in reality a star brilliantly illumined with wax tapers, and beneath it stood two ecclesiastics, who inquired of them whom they sought? On replying that they were seeking for the newly-born child Jesus, a curtain was drawn aside, where an infant was seen, before whom they prostrated themselves in adoration, and presented gifts.

By degrees this ancient custom of the Catholic Church became so far altered, that the priests, instead of receiving offerings in the sacred edifice, were accustomed, either in person or by deputy, to proceed from house to house with their paraphernalia and collect money. When, however, Roman Catholicism was altogether abolished in Sweden, this custom was taken up by schoolboys, and finally by youths amongst the lower classes.

At the present day the 'Bethlehem Star,' as the show

is called, is not only carried round on twelfth day, but during the whole of 'Jul' from Christmas eve to Saint Knut's day, the 13th of January, when the festival is considered to terminate.

Though we in England are no strangers to a somewhat similar exhibition to the one in question, a few words as to how it is conducted in Sweden may not be altogether out of place.

The '*Stjern Gossar*,' or 'Star boys,' as the youths are called who go round with the 'Bethlehem Star,' are usually from five to six in number. Three of them represent the three kings or wise men of the East. They are dressed in long white robes reaching to the ground, with a red band about the loins, a second band, but of a different colour, across the breast from right to left, and a third around the left arm. They are either bareheaded or wear paper caps, intended for coronets, that are ornamented with gold and silver paper, or other finery. At times the face of one of them is blackened, to represent a Moor, or negro, from Morialand.* The fourth youth, the 'Star-king,' is clad like the others, but his head-gear is more lofty and brilliant. As his name denotes, he carries the 'Bethlehem Star,' a lantern in the form of a six-pointed star ✡ made of coloured and transparent paper, and illumined by one or more wax candles. This is borne on a stick, and contrived as constantly to revolve. The fifth youth represents 'Judas,' and bears the purse. He is attired in a skin cloak, turned inside out, has on his head a horn-fashioned black paper cap, and at times a dish-clout, or the like,

* Morialand, East, from the German *Morgenland*, land of the morning or sunrise.

pinned to his back. His face—provided this is not the case with either of the three 'wise men'—is moreover blackened. Occasionally a sixth boy acts the part of 'King Herod.' He has a flowing beard, wears a double-peaked white paper cap, and has a wooden sword girded to his side.*

Thus grotesquely accoutred, the 'Star boys' wander from village to village, and from house to house (though now for the most part in the precincts of the towns), and on entering the house they address the inmates in the following words, sung in chorus:

'Good even, fair ladies and gentlemen too,
Both master and mistress be merry and gay,
A right happy Christmas we wish unto you,
May the Lord from all evil defend you this day.'

Then they go on with a kind of chanted doggrel, telling how

'Mary, she journeyed to Bethlehem,
For the sake of her gracious Lord,'

there giving birth to her little son; how Herod afterwards came to the 'land of Midian,' and how the 'wise men' presented their gifts. After that the rest of the performers are introduced, particularly Judas.

'He wears a cap in the shape of a horn,
You may find it perhaps in the gin-shop at morn.'

Judas then goes about with his bag on behalf of the others, begging for money, bread, or other kinds of food, spirits, and candles for the 'Bethlehem Star,' after which the last verse is sung, and the whole proceeding takes an end.

* In Bohus Län, I am told, there is always a Joseph, who is made to play the fool or cuckold.

'Now thanks, good people, for what you have given;
Each kindly gift will be noted in heaven.
So a right merry Christmas we wish you all,
Good-night, good-night to both great and small.'

Amongst other pastimes in which people indulge on the evening in question, is one known in the parish of Lima, in Dalecarlia, under the name of 'taking unto oneself a twelfth-night sweetheart or wife.'

When all the company are assembled in the 'Lek-stuga,' spoken of a few pages back, and have danced a while, the music suddenly ceases. The dance is then for a while suspended, and the doors are closed. Two '*Ordningsmän,*' or men appointed to maintain order in the game about to be played, are then selected. These functionaries now direct all the women to form a ring, and the men to arrange themselves in rows against the wall. At a given signal the music commences anew, and the women begin to dance once more. After a time one of the 'Ordningsmän,' in a loud voice, directs all the men—married as well as single—'To take unto himself a wife from among the women who are dancing.' This order is on the instant obeyed, when a regular scramble ensues amongst the men to get hold of the best-looking, who, however, generally fall to the lot of the strongest and most energetic. Happy the wife that on these occasions is remembered by her husband, who is now at liberty to unite himself with the beauty that best pleases his fancy. Such of the women as are unsought, whether in consequence of their ugliness or less good reputation, have therefore for a whole year to bear the reproaches of their fellows. When the men have chosen wives, it is the duty of each one to give his better-half for the time being a kiss, a hug, and a dance,

which gives rise to many ludicrous scenes; as, for instance, when a youth of tender years, as at times happens, is paired with a decrepit old woman. The dance in question over, the nuptial contract is dissolved, and dancing goes on as merrily as ever.

St Knut's day, the 13th of January, and twentieth after Jul, was in the early ages of Catholicism a great and solemn festival, but is not now kept by the Swedish Church.

Its origin seems doubtful. According to some it is called after Knut, surnamed the Holy, of Denmark; but others attach the honour to his nephew, Duke Knut Laward (basely murdered by his near relative, Magnus Nilsson, on the 13th of January, 1131), who after his death was canonized, as well on account of his uncle as his own great deeds in arms. There are those, however, who are of opinion that, let its present name be derived from what source it may, it is ingrafted on some festival of the ancient Scandinavians,—either on that to the honour of the goddess Disa, or Goa, or, what seems more probable, on that which took place on the last day of 'Jul-blot.'

Though St Knut's day is not kept by the Swedish Church, it is nevertheless looked on by the peasantry as a people's festival, and as such is, by them, more or less celebrated.

Amongst other amusements then indulged in, it is usual for the young folk to form a ring about the '*Jul-Bord,*' and to dance around it on the straw with which the floor is strewed. The old people, in the mean time, enjoy themselves with their pipes; and whilst draining many a tankard in honour of the occasion, they sing as follows:—

'Twentieth day Knut
Drives Jul out.'

Afterwards, all the viands remaining on the table are removed from thence, amongst which is the 'Jul-galt' and the 'Jul-bröd,' bread baked specially for Christmas. These, after being thoroughly dried, are preserved until the spring, when a certain portion, pulverized, is given to the oxen and the horses which draw the plough, 'in the belief that they will thereby not only be freed from sickness, but enabled to keep better together when pastured in the wild, open forests, or on extensive moor lands;' and another portion to the individuals by whom the ground is tilled, 'that they may always agree well together.' Many, indeed, hide away a piece of the 'Jul-galt,' or of the 'Jul-bröd,' till the season again comes round, imagining that in certain disorders it will afford a sure cure.

An old game, peculiar to the day of which I am speaking, and one which even now is not altogether forgotten, is thus described by Rudbeck:—

'When the nineteen days of Jul are over, they, on the twentieth, carry on a "*Gästabuds-Krig*," or war of hospitality. The master of the house comes into the apartment where the "Jul" festivities have taken place, and affixes his axe into the middle of the floor; the housemaid follows him with a broom, the kitchen-maid with a knife and a spoon, or rather ladle, the "*Källare Dräng*," or tapster, he whose duty it is to look after the cellar, with the spigot of the ale barrel, with other like company, and makes pretence to drive away the guests; and should there be any present who can read and sing, they read

aloud King Orre's Legend, and sing his ballad, the words of which I have not at hand, but which in some degree resemble our own doggrel:—

'Old King Cole
Was a merry old soul,
And a merry old soul was he;
He called for his pipe,
And he called for his wine,
And he called for his fiddlers three.'

CHAPTER XV.

CANDLEMAS TO EASTER.

CANDLEMAS DAY.—STORY OF DISA.—HEALTH TO ELDSBORGS.—ANNUNCIATION DAY, CALLED HJETTE DAY.—SUPERSTITIONS.—GOOD FRIDAY.—LEGENDS OF THE DWARF BIRCH.—THE ASPEN TREE.—THE SWALLOW.—THE TURTLE DOVE.—THE CROSSBILL.—THE STORK.—THE LAPWING.—EASTER EVE.—HARD EGGS.—EASTER DAY.—ANCIENT CUSTOMS.—SUPERSTITIONS.—WITCH JOURNEY TO BLÅ KULLA.

CANDLEMAS day (the feast of the Purification of the blessed Virgin, in places also called '*Lilla Jul*,' or little Christmas), which occurs in the first days of February, is kept by the Swedish Church, but always on a Sunday.

This festival, as with 'Jul,' is believed to be ingrafted on one of the three great sacrificial feasts of the ancient Scandinavians, namely, on that of 'Disa-blot,' instituted in honour of Disa, more properly '*Goa*,' or '*Göja*,' worshipped as the protectress of the fruits of the earth, and to whom not only animals, but human beings, were sacrificed.

This goddess is said to have received the appellation of 'Disa' after a heroine of that name celebrated in the oldest of the 'Sagas.' The substance of the legend respecting whom, which, though interesting, is too long for insertion in these pages, is as follows :—

The country was threatened with a famine, and on its near approach the great council of the nation decreed 'that all the old and infirm people should be put to death, so that the rest might have wherewithal to support life.' The king, however, who was of a mild and benevolent disposition, determined, before carrying this cruel mandate into execution, on consulting the oracle.

This was done, and the reply was, 'that if there was found in the kingdom a young and beautiful maiden who had wit enough to find her way to the monarch's palace in Sigtuna "neither on foot, horseback, nor riding in a carriage; neither by day nor by night; not during either the first or the last quarter of the moon; and neither dressed nor undressed," it was possible she might, by her wise counsels, be the means of preventing the bloody catastrophe in question.'

Disa, who resided at a place called Vengarn, was the personification of loveliness and modesty; and feeling deeply for the distress of her countrymen, and in the hopes of saving many thousands from a cruel death, resolved on attempting to fulfil the hard conditions imposed by the oracle, which she succeeded in effecting in the following manner.

She rode in a sledge, by the side of which was led a goat; one of her feet rested on the back of the animal, and the other in the vehicle; and a net was her only covering. Thus equipped and provided, she set off on the journey during those days when the sun was believed to be stationary, which are not considered as belonging to any one particular month in the year; and her arrival at the

royal palace took place during the full moon, and at dusk, just between light and dark.

Disa, on being admitted to the presence, was welcomed by the king, whom she advised not to kill the aged and infirm, as had been ordained by the council, but to cause a portion of his subjects to migrate to the wilder parts of his dominions and bring them into cultivation, whereby sufficient space would be left for the remainder to subsist in comfort. The monarch, who himself was young and handsome, praised her counsel, and took her to wife; and the fame of her wisdom spread over the whole country.

Amongst other superstitious customs attaching to Candlemas day, one of the most curious is that mentioned by Parson Ödman, the incumbent, as said, of Tanum, in Bohus Län. He says:—

'As the ancient Northmen worshipped Vulcan, that is, fire, so during "Kyndelmas" ("*Kyndle*" in the old Gothic language implies fire or light) people here are in the habit of drinking to the health or memory of "*Eldsborg.*"* For this purpose they place two lighted candles on the floor of the apartment, and between them a cushion, on which the several members of the household seat themselves in succession, and each one drinks the health in question out of a wooden bowl, and afterwards, with his teeth, casts the latter over his head. "Should it fall to the floor bottom upwards, he who threw it will die within the year;" but if, on the contrary, it remains upright, "he will live."

* The meaning of this word somewhat puzzles the learned; some thinking, with Parson Ödman, that it implies a castle of fire, or fire in some shape, whilst others are of opinion that 'Eldsborg' is simply a corruption of '*Alf bæjar*,' that is, the protecting spirits of the homestead.

'In the neighbouring parish of Nafverstad,' the worthy parson goes on to say, 'the manner of drinking health to "Eldsborg" is somewhat different. A little before day-break the good woman of the house lights a fire in the oven, and whilst the wood is burning at the best, she causes all the members of the family to kneel in a semi-circle in front of the fire, and when in this posture she hands them, one after the other, a bowl filled with ale and a slice of bread and butter; and when they have all drank the health in question, the remainder of the liquor and bread is cast into the flames during the mumbling of certain words and the loud utterance of the following formula:—

"Mount thus high, my fire!
But neither higher nor hotter,"

and this under the belief that the house, during that year, will be safe from fire.

'No later than the year 1740,' M. Ödman further informs us, 'legal proceedings were taken by the clergyman of the parish of Krokstad against five individuals detected in the act of drinking this toast, who, having been convicted of the offence under the ecclesiastical law against the practice of witchcraft, were sentenced not only to corporal punishment, but to do penance in the church.'

Annunciation day, with us also called Lady day, which falls on the 25th March, and was in Catholic times a great festival in Sweden, is kept by the Swedish Church, though simply as a Sunday.

This day (as also the 24th of October) is usually known as '*Flyttning's Dag*,' or day on which servants, who in Sweden are always engaged by the year or for six months,

remove from one 'situation' to another. In the olden times this was about Michaelmas, when they were always allowed a *free week*, wherein to repair their clothes, visit friends and relations, and amuse themselves; which good custom is, to a certain extent at least, still maintained.

By the ancients Annunciation day was called '*Hjette Dag*,' meaning the day of great events, 'because many remarkable occurrences, besides the announcement of the coming of our Saviour, had taken place upon it.' The world, for example, according to their notions, was then created; the first gospel was given in Paradise; Abel was murdered by his brother Cain; Noah departed from the ark; Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed; Abraham was enjoined by God to sacrifice his son Isaac; the people of Israel departed out of the land of Egypt; the champion Goliath was slain; John the Baptist was beheaded; St James shared the same fate; St Stephen was stoned to death, and St Bartholomew flayed alive. It was further believed that Christ was crucified on this day, and that on this day He will make an end of the world.

Amongst other superstitions regarding this day may be mentioned the idea entertained by the peasants, that 'if there be frost during the preceding night it will continue to freeze during the succeeding forty days;' as also, that if at early morn, and for some hours afterwards, the weather be perfectly clear, 'a productive harvest is certain.'

Easter, '*Päsk*,' which usually falls about the middle of April, is a great festival with the Swedish Church; but, with the exception of Good Friday and Easter day, is, by people in general, rather looked on as a season of recreation than one for strict religious observances.

Not so, however, in Catholic times; for dumb week, as Passion week was then called, from the church bells remaining mute or unrung till Easter morn, was considered so holy that during its continuance no kind of business was entered into, nor was the usual friendly intercourse kept up between friends and neighbours.

Of Good Friday ('*Läng Fredag*') there is little to relate, other than that it is rigidly observed, as with us in England. Visits are not then usually paid or received; and the churches, in the rural districts at least, are decorated with leaves, as also with flowers, if such are then procurable; and the floors of the sacred edifices are, moreover, strewed with 'Granris.'

Formerly, on the morning of this day, and in remembrance of our Saviour's cruel tortures, parents and masters were accustomed to scourge their children and servants with rods, a punishment called '*Päsk-skräck*,' or Easter fright, 'to deter them from the commission of sin, which caused God's Son so much suffering.' In parts of the country, indeed, this custom still continues, though only in play, and amongst children and young people.

The Redeemer, as it is believed, was scourged with twigs of the dwarf birch (*Betula Nana*). Hence that bush, or rather shrub, is in Sweden named '*Läng Fredags Ris*,' that is, Good Friday's rod. 'Before the advent of Christ, according to tradition, it was a lofty and umbrageous tree, and, as with other birches, the pride of the forest and the grove; but since the crucifixion it has, as a punishment, been doomed to hide its diminished form in fens and morasses high up on the fells, and with hardly the capacity of holding its head above the surface of the earth.'

Of the aspen, or black poplar, it is moreover said, that when violent hands were laid on our Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane, He was seated under its shade. 'Previously, as with other trees, its leaves sat steady on the branches; but on witnessing His agony their fibres burst asunder, and from that day to this the slightest breath of wind causes them to tremble.'

Another saying of the black poplar is 'that the Holy Cross was made from that tree, which is the cause of its leaves being continually in motion.'

In connection with the crucifixion there are some beautiful legends in Sweden regarding certain birds.

Of the swallow, 'Svala,' it is related, 'that when our Saviour was hanging on the cross, a little bird came and perched thereon, peered sorrowfully down on the sufferer, and twitted "*Hugsvala, Svala, Svala honom;*" that is, "Console, console, console Him." Hence the name of "Svala," or swallow. Long after the crucifixion, moreover, she would often sit on the cross. When, however, it was taken down by the enemies of Christendom, and buried in the earth, she flew, frightened and sorrowing, away from the spot; but when it was recovered and re-erected, she returned, and frequently made it her resting-place.'*

'Owing to the commiseration thus evinced by the swallow towards the Redeemer, Heaven ordained that blessings and prosperity should ever after attend on those who protected her. Hence she is everywhere looked on with a sort of love and reverence, and it is considered sinful to molest her or to destroy her nest.'

* '*Korsmessan*,' or Holy Rood day, both in spring and autumn, is on many Runic staves, or tablets, marked with a swallow, tallying with the migration and return of that bird.

A somewhat similar tale is told of the turtledove. 'When our Saviour was crucified she hovered over the fatal tree, and at length alighted on it, looked mournfully at the sufferer's blood, sighed deeply, and gave utterance to her plaintive note, "*Kurri, Kurri, Kurri*" (implying *Kyrie*); that is, "Lord, Lord, Lord!" Since that time she has never been joyful, but constantly winged her flight around the world, repeating her sorrowful cry.'

The pine bullfinch (*Corythus Enucleator*), but according to the German version of the story, the crossbill (*Loxia Pytiuppsitamus*), is, moreover, believed in Sweden not only to have greatly commiserated the sufferings of Christ, but to have used its best endeavours to free Him from the fatal tree. Longfellow, the prince of American poets, shall, however, relate the legend:—

'On the cross the dying Saviour
Heavenward lifts His eyelids calm,
Feels, but scarcely feels, a trembling
In His pierced and bleeding palm.

'And by all the world forsaken,
Sees he how with zealous care
At the ruthless nail of iron
A little bird is striving there.

'Stain'd with blood and never tiring,
With its beak it doth not cease;
From the cross 'twould free our Saviour,
Its Creator's Son release.

'And the Saviour speaks in mildness:
"Blest be thou of all the good!
Bear, as token of this moment,
Marks of blood and holy rood!"

'And that bird is call'd the crossbill;
Cover'd all with blood so clear.
In the groves of pine it singeth
Songs, like legends, strange to hear.'

The stork is likewise said to have flown over the fatal

tree, crying in a sympathizing tone, '*Styrk, Styrk, Styrk, Honom!*' that is, 'Strengthen, strengthen, strengthen Him.' Hence the name of stork; and in remembrance of the affectionate solicitude shown by this bird on the sad occasion, 'the gift was bestowed on her of bringing peace and happiness to the households where she is permitted, undisturbed, to rear her young. The stork is, therefore, a welcome visitor everywhere in Sweden; and in Scania, where, during the breeding season, these birds are numerous, the peasants not only place in their way the needful materials wherewith to form their nests, but protect them to the utmost in their power. It is said, indeed, that should a person be so incautious as to shoot a stork near the homestead, he risks an angry altercation with the owner, if not worse consequences.

Though the swallow, the turtledove, the crossbill, and the stork thus sympathized with the Redeemer in His agony, and are therefore looked on with so much regard, a somewhat different feeling is entertained in respect to some other birds, which, instead of commiserating, are said to have mocked His cruel sufferings.

The lapwing is especially named; and, as a punishment, 'was condemned for evermore to dwell in fens and morasses.'

This bird, according to another legend, 'was handmaiden to the Virgin Mary, and stole her mistress's silver scissors, for which crime she was transformed into a lapwing, and as a brand of the theft her tail was cleft, or divided, in the manner of the purloined implement: and she was furthermore doomed to fly for ever and ever from tussock to tussock, uttering her plaintive and oft-repeated

cry, "*Tywit, Tywit, Tywit!*" that is, "I stole, I stole it, I stole it."'

On Easter eve great rejoicings take place. In many parts of the country fire-arms are then discharged in every direction, and huge bonfires are lighted on hills and eminences. Some will have it that these apparent signs of joy and gladness are for no other purpose than to keep away the 'Troll,' and other evil spirits, which then, as on Christmas eve, are believed to be more especially on the move. But others surmise, and with much more probability, that the bonfires in question have some kind of connection with the '*Balders Bălar*,' or fires formerly lighted about Midsummer at the festival in honour of Balder, the God of the Sun, or of light, of which more hereafter.

On this evening every one must eat stirabout, composed of milk and rice; as also hard-cooked eggs. This is done because the egg is supposed to be symbolic of the resurrection. Although to all appearance dead, it still contains within itself the germ of life, which, bursting its earthly shell, soars aloft in the form of a bird.

Easter day, so far as I am aware, is kept as an ordinary Sunday, without having any particular religious observances attached to it.

In the olden times, however, it was a very solemn festival, and was ushered in with great rejoicings. Psalms were sung, and the sounds of musical instruments were everywhere heard; all the bells were rung, and on the hills and eminences flambeaux and bonfires blazed. Every one put on his best attire, and high and low hastened

to church, which, from an early hour in the morning, was brilliantly lighted up with innumerable wax candles. Before the altar, which, together with other parts of the building, was decorated with bouquets of flowers and beautiful tapestry, &c., was placed a sarcophagus, wherein was an image of wood or stone, representing our Saviour anointed with balsam, or other odoriferous oils. This was intended to mark the care the women took of the body of Jesus. The priests, with their attendants, walked in procession into the church. He who took the lead bore in his hand a huge wax taper, called 'the great paschal light,' which was intended to represent the Redeemer. Those who followed in his train carried also lights, thus signifying that as Christ preceded them in the world by a good example, they also, with their burning lamps, would walk in his footsteps.

Works of love and charity were practised by every one on this day. Prisoners, for instance, were set free, and slaves obtained their liberty. Gifts, amongst which were painted and gilt eggs, were freely exchanged between people. All were regarded as friends and brothers; and when they met they embraced each other with the joyful exclamation, 'Christ is risen;' and received the like joyful reply, 'Yes, He is in truth risen!' Even nature itself was supposed to rejoice on this great day, it being the general belief amongst the common people that the sun, at its rising, danced or went round in the heavens.

Easter Monday, though nominally a holy day with the Swedish Church, is, as with us in England, devoted in great measure to recreation and amusement.

Superstitions without end are rife in Sweden regarding Easter, a few of which are subjoined.

Crosses must then be made on the doors of the dwelling-house and outbuildings; 'such crosses, as it is believed, scaring away the "Troll," &c.'

No one must name rats, mice, serpents, or other injurious animals and reptiles during Passion week, 'or they will swarm throughout the year.'

If one's house be then well swept, and that the broom with which this operation was effected be afterwards deposited in the dwelling of another, 'the vermin that would otherwise have infested one's own premises, will take up their abode with him.'

Webs of linen must not then be left out-of-doors at night to bleach, 'or they will be bewitched; as also the ground whereon the flax grew, so as no longer to prove productive.'

The '*Brätta,*' or '*Bratta,*' that is, the implement used for crushing flax, must also be taken into the house at nightfall 'if one will retain one's good luck with linen.'

'No linen habiliments must be washed during Easter week; neither must any of the household utensils be lent to any one.'

If water be then fetched from the spring at so early an hour in the morning that the small birds have not even began to twitter, 'one will not be sunburnt that year.'

No one on Easter eve must spin or perform work of a rotatory nature, such as wind thread, grind the hand-mill, &c., 'because it was on Easter morn that the sun, as said, danced in the heavens.'

But of all the superstitions relating to Easter, the most singular is that applicable to Maundy-Thursday. It is on the evening of this day that the so-called '*Päsk-Käirngar*,' or Easter witches, set off for 'Blă Kulla,' that is, the Blue-hill, the reputed residence of his Satanic Majesty, that they may pay their respects to him; and if only a good look-out be kept, the old ladies may be seen mounted on cows, goats, rakes, broomsticks, or what not, shooting up chimneys, like so many rockets; and, this little difficulty overcome, wending their way through space with lightning speed; leaving in their wake a stream of fire as it were!

When the hags are about to start on these aerial journeys, they are said to mutter these words: 'In Satan's name straight up and away, past every corner to the end of the world.' It is related of a servant girl, that, hearing her mistress repeat this formula before setting off for 'Blă Kulla,' she thought it would be good fun to take a similar trip herself, and therefore bestrode a broomstick for the purpose; but instead of using the orthodox words mentioned, she, from forgetfulness, said, 'In Satan's name straight up and down,' and the consequence was, that throughout the livelong night the poor creature was violently hurled up and down the chimney!

Hence on the evening in question certain precautions must be taken to prevent the old ladies from leaving home. Rakes, broomsticks, &c., should not then be left under the bare heavens, otherwise the hags would at once mount them, and be off quick as thought! Nor must smoke after sundown be seen to issue from the chimney, for when no longer visible, they are believed to be incapable of inflicting injury on people. Towards evening, therefore, the

fire is put out, and not lighted again until after sunrise on the following morning.

The witches are believed to remain in 'Blă Kulla,' enjoying the hospitalities of the evil one, and ministering to his pleasures in return, until Easter day, when at an early hour in the morning they set off homewards. Provided proper precautions be taken, they may then, it is said, be shot at with impunity. Instances, indeed, are on record of their having been killed outright! He, however, who thus lies in wait for the hags with deadly intent must load his gun with a piece of silver or steel, and station himself on a muck-heap near the stable-door, and so soon as he has discharged his piece hasten, if he would avoid evil consequences, into the stable, and throw himself on his face in a dark corner, and not look up again until he has slept for an hour or more.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAY DAY AND HOLY ROOD DAY.

MAY DAY.—BONFIRES.—VISIONS.—MAY SONGS.—BATTLE OF WINTER *v.* SUMMER.—INTERMENT OF WINTER.—MUSIC AND DANCING.—MAGPIE FEAST.—SUPERSTITIONS.—TROLL HARES.—HOLY ROOD DAY.—LEGEND OF THE HOLY CROSS.—THE 'WANDERING JEW.'

THE 1st of May (*'Valborgs Mässe Dag,'* Sw.) is a great people's festival in the more midland and southern parts of Sweden. Its Swedish designation was given it by the monks in honour of a holy virgin named Valborg, afterwards abbess of a Benedictine convent in Bavaria, and was kept as a holy day by the Catholic Church, but beyond doubt it was ingrafted on a great festival of the ancient Scandinavians. They divided the year into three parts: the first, winter, commenced at 'Jul;' and the second, spring, as it would appear, on the 1st of May, which day, as there is every reason to believe, they celebrated with great rejoicings. It would, moreover, seem to have been a sacrificial feast to the gods; for in the 16th century a tradition was current in the 'Härad' of Oxia, Scania, 'that in the olden times people were accustomed on the first days in spring to immolate a living child on a great

heap of stones, a "Cairn," as we should call it in Scotland, and dance around it during the livelong night to the sound of drums and bassoons.'

The festival in question is ushered in on the preceding evening. Huge bonfires, which should be lighted by striking two flint stones together, then blaze on all the hills and knolls. Every large hamlet has its own fire, so that one may at times see from twenty to thirty within the same parish. The youth of both sexes assemble from all parts of the country at these fires, when, forming a ring (two or three rings, the one within the other, it may be, if the company is numerous), they dance around them until the night be well advanced. Whilst the young are thus enjoying themselves, the old people take note of the several fires, and carefully mark if their number be odd or even; as also if the flames incline to the north or to the south. 'In the former case, they believe the spring will be cold and backward; but in the latter, genial and mild.'

Strange visions are at times seen at the fires in question. 'In the year 1830, many people were collected about one of them on the hill of Arlaberget, in Westmanland, when suddenly a spectre, in the form of an old Lapp woman, stood beside it; which so terrified the bystanders, that they ran helter-skelter down the declivity, and it was not until after the lapse of ten whole years that they ventured on again kindling a fire on the same eminence.'

At another of these mystic fires on Selaö, an island in the lake Mälarn, a veritable ghost was also seen, which caused similar discomfiture amongst the people.

We are further told, 'that in the year 1835, when several of the inhabitants of Wal, in the province of Up-

land, were congregated about one of these fires, the "Troll" caused so terrible a tempest to arise, accompanied by such torrents of rain, as altogether to extinguish the flames.'

In certain parts of Sweden, more especially in the provinces of Scania and Bleking, it is customary on the evening in question for the youths to meet together, that they may commemorate the advent of the spring. Each one carries in his hand a bunch of fresh-gathered birch-twigs, that are wholly or partially in leaf, and, with the village fiddler at their head, they go from house to house, singing so-called '*Maj-Visor*,' or May songs, the purport of which is a prayer for favourable weather for the growing crops, an abundant harvest, and worldly and spiritual blessings. At the last verse all heads are uncovered, and the eyes of every one uplifted to heaven. The musicians then play another tune, and the exhibition terminates with our Lord's prayer versified.

Some one of the company carries a basket, in which is deposited the several gifts, consisting for the most part of eggs and the like, as a provision for the approaching Whitsuntide holidays, that are bestowed on them; and if they have been well received and entertained, they insert a leafy twig in the roof above the cottage door. They then make their bow, wish the people farewell, and move off elsewhere.

Thus they wander about all night, and return not home until morning. Having visited the last house, they sing themselves home by a farewell song.

May day itself, provided the weather be propitious, is for the most part devoted to outdoor amusements. The pleasures of the table, however, are not forgotten, and

feasting, with the peasants at least, is the order of the day. In their potations, moreover, they are more liberal than usual, in accordance with the old adage that every one must then 'drink marrow into his bones.'

They indulge on this day in many games and pastimes, some having reference to the advent of spring. Olaus Magnus, who flourished in the fifteenth century, makes mention of one common in his time, which was conducted as follows:—

'A number of youths on horseback were drawn up in two lines facing each other,—the one party representing "Winter" and the other "Summer." The leader of the former was clad in wild beasts' skins, and he and his men were armed with snow-balls and pieces of ice. The commander of the latter—"*Maj Greve*," or Count May—was, on the contrary, decorated with leaves and flowers, and his followers had for weapons branches of the birch or linden tree, which, having been previously steeped in water, were then in leaf. At a given signal, a sham fight ensued between the opposing forces. If the season was cold and backward, "Winter" and his party were impetuous in their attack, and in the beginning the advantage was supposed to rest with them; but if the weather was genial and the spring had fairly set in, "Maj Greve" and his men carried all before them. Under any circumstances, however, the umpire always declared the victory to rest with "Summer." The winter party then strewed ashes on the ground, and a joyous banquet terminated the game.'

We also read that in 1845 the students of the university of Upsala—who of late years have celebrated the 1st of May in various ways, as, for instance, in personating

gipsy encampments, peasants' weddings, &c., &c.,—enacted, with much state and display, the formal interment of the past winter. The ceremony concluded, a speech full of wit and point, but incapable of translation from its having reference chiefly to individuals and circumstances little known abroad,—entitled 'Funeral Oration held over the departed Governor of the Snow Regions, Knight of the Snow-plough, &c., &c.,' was made and afterwards printed.

The buried winter, however, played the parties who had thus pronounced its obsequies the somewhat scurvy trick of once more rising from its grave; for the following morning was ushered in with a violent snow-storm, and it was not until the sun again broke forth that it received its death-blow.

Music and dancing are not forgotten, as may well be supposed, on May day; and in parts of the country they have then a peculiar dance that is not undeserving of notice.

The youths form a large ring. Each pair join hands, on which a maiden seats herself, her hands resting on the shoulders of her partners, or, if on very friendly terms, with them placed around their necks. A polska, or other lively tune, is then struck up, and the dance commences, during which the youths rock their fair burthens to and fro, and lower or elevate them in accordance with the music. All the while the girls keep constantly casting their knotted kerchiefs, or the like, from the one to the other, across the ring, which increases the general hilarity.'

In places even the children have on this day their little festival, which, however, they earn by their own useful exertions. They clamber up—at times to the endanger-

ment of life and limb—to all the magpies' nests in the vicinity, and rob them of both eggs and young. The spoil, deposited in a large basket, is afterwards borne by them from house to house in the hamlet, and exhibited to the good wives; one of the company, who has been selected for the purpose, singing in the while some doggrel lines to the following effect:—

'Best loves from Mr and Mrs Magpie,
From all their eggs and all their fry.
O give them alms, if ever so small,
Else hens and chickens, eggs and all,
A prey to "Piet"* will surely fall.'

At all the homesteads the children visit, some little contribution in the shape of bacon, eggs, milk, &c., is made towards their '*Maj Gille*,' or May banquet. And on a certain day they all assemble at some house in the hamlet, where a huge pancake, composed of the good things they have collected, has been prepared, and on which they feast to hearts' content.

A dance succeeds the repast, at which all the old people, both men and women, are present, 'who are delighted at witnessing the innocent enjoyment of the children at this their only ball during the year.'

Superstitions regarding May day are not wanting.

It is then, for instance, that the Easter witches despatch their emissaries, the '*Troll hares*,' to milk other people's cows. Hence cattle are for the most part confined on this day to the 'Cow-houses,' and smoked with brimstone, &c., and, even if permitted to pasture in the forest, the peasant himself, instead of his children, accompanies the animals, conceiving that he is better able to protect them from evil

* The Scotch name for the magpie.

spirits. On the return of the cattle in the evening, moreover, they are very carefully examined, and should it be found that any one of them has received injury of any kind, the witches have the credit of it, and a light is forthwith struck with two flint stones over the beast, 'which is supposed to guard it from the evil consequences that would otherwise ensue.'

These Troll hares (by many said to be black, of which colour hares are occasionally met with in the northern forests) all believed to be 'possessed,' and therefore proof against fire-arms unless the gun be charged with either a steel or silver bullet.'

The superstition in question is a very ancient one, but space admits not of my properly explaining its origin; and that it is very deeply rooted in the minds of the common people I myself can testify to. Once, indeed, when shooting near to the town of Falkenberg, in the province of Halland, I started and shot a hare. Whilst reloading, a peasant, the owner of the ground, accosted me, and after looking attentively at my prize, remarked, 'That is not the hare that has done me so much harm; she's bigger. I wish you would shoot her.' On questioning the man why he was so anxious to get rid of the animal, he replied, 'Because she nightly milks my cows.'

At an early hour on May day morning, again, 'the horses must be swam in a neighbouring pool or brook, which, it is believed, will protect them from the '*Scab*' during the summer.'

Holy Rood day, or that of the exaltation of the cross, though no longer kept by the Swedish Church, was during Catholic times celebrated on two several occasions within

the year with much pomp and ceremony. The first on the 3rd of May, the anniversary of the day on which the Holy Cross was found in 325, by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great; the second on the 14th of September, the anniversary of its recovery from the infidels by the Emperor Heraclius in 628, the latter festival being the greater of the two.

Many legends respecting the Holy Cross are treasured up by the Swedish peasantry, and amongst the rest the following:—

'A certain tree planted by Lot, Abraham's brother, at about an hour's distance from Jerusalem, was much renowned amongst the Jews. When the constructers of Solomon's Temple sought after timber for the holy edifice, all the trees willingly complied with their desire, and fell of themselves, as it were, within the building. Amongst the wood thus collected was a branch of Lot's tree, which the builders could not possibly fit into the walls, for hew it how they would, it was always either too long or too short! The prophets were then consulted, who said the wood was cursed, and must be cast into the Pool of Bethsaida; which was at once done, and it immediately sank to the bottom. When, however, Jesus was condemned to be crucified, and that the soldiers sought for a cross, the branch in question at once rose to the surface, floated to the strand, and offered itself for the purpose, and ever afterwards, through the blood of the atonement shed at Golgotha, was rendered holy.'

The meaning of this legend, we read, would seem to be that the branch spoken of was from the beginning chosen alone to bear the curse that at man's 'fall' was

entailed upon all nature, and that should one day find its atonement through our Redeemer. Above the spot where the tree stood is erected a cloister, priests belonging to which point out to pilgrims an altar-piece whereon the tree in question, divested of one of its branches, is depicted.

A second version of the legend runs thus: 'When Adam was one hundred and thirty years old he fell ill, and during his sickness expressed a great longing for some fruit from Paradise. His son, desirous of gratifying his father's wishes, set off in search of the latter. When he came to the place where he expected to find the garden, he was confronted by an angel, who presented him with a twig of a tree from thence, and said, "Give him this, and it shall go better with him." The son rejoiced greatly, and retraced his steps, but on his arrival at home he found that his old father was no more; he therefore planted the twig in question on Adam's grave, situated to the East of Jerusalem, and in time it grew to be a great and lofty tree.

'When the builders of Solomon's Temple sought over hill and dale for timber for the magnificent structure, a branch was lopped from off this tree; but let the workmen cut as they might, it could never be got into proper shape for their purpose; and in anger, therefore, they laid it as a "*Spång*," or foot-bridge, over the brook Kedron.

'In Solomon's time there lived a woman whose name is well-known in the north. She was called Sibella, and was so wise as to have acquired the appellation of God's Counsellor; but though of a good figure and handsome, one of her feet was deformed, she having what is commonly

called a "Goose-foot." Having heard of Solomon's wisdom, she went in search of him, and was well received by the king, who learnt from her many things that would come to pass in the future, but which were hidden from other people.

'On one occasion Solomon, in her company, would go over the brook Kedron. When, however, they came to the little hand-bridge spoken of (although the king himself passed over it), she would not avail herself of the convenience, but waded through the water beside it. Arrived at the other side of the brook, the woman found, to her great joy, that the deformity mentioned had altogether disappeared, and that her misshapen foot was now like unto the other! Solomon inquired how this had happened, and why she had not crossed over the bridge; to which she replied, "The tree which lies there is holy, and will come to great honour, because the promised one, the Saviour of the world, who shall be born of a pure virgin, and who shall innocently suffer, shall bleed and die on that tree." '

Another legend relating to the Holy Cross, or more properly, perhaps, to the renowned Wandering Jew, whose name was Ahasuerus, and who was a shoemaker by trade, is to this effect:—

'The Redeemer, when on the way to Golgotha, oppressed by the weight of the fatal tree, was desirous of resting a while at the door of this man's dwelling, but the savage, to please the enemies of Christianity, drove him from thence with blows and imprecations. As a punishment, he was condemned to roam to and fro in the wide world until doomsday. Many in Sweden at the present

day believe he is still pursuing his weary pilgrimage, and when any unknown and singular-looking individual is seen in the rural districts, it is not unusual, we are told, to hear the affrighted children exclaim,—"Surely that must be the 'Jerusalem shoemaker.'"'

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM ST HALFVARD'S DAY TO HOLY TRINITY DAY.

ST HALFVARD'S DAY.—ST ERIC'S DAY.—THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING. — THE SÄTER—THE JOURNEY THERE. — THE SÄTER STUGA.— THE OCCUPATIONS THERE.—THE WILD BEASTS.—THE CARESSIVE NAMES FOR THEM.—THE RETURN TO THE HOMESTEAD.—ASCENSION DAY.—SUPERSTITIONS.—WHITSUNTIDE.—GREENWICH HILL.—HOLY TRINITY DAY.

'*St Halfvard's Mässan*,' the 15th of May, was also, in the days of Popery, a holy day both with the Swedish and Norwegian Churches. It was instituted in honour of St Halfvard, one of the most celebrated of Scandinavian saints, who was worshipped as well in Norway, his native country, as in the parts of Sweden adjacent thereto. He is said to have been related to St Olof, the famous Norwegian king and saint, of whom presently, and to have resided near the town of Drammen. He was murdered, and his body cast into the river Dram; but it presently rose to the surface again, on account of which miracle, and others wrought on the occasion, he was canonized, and several churches were erected to his memory, in more than one of which his image is, we are told, still to be seen.

Though 'St Halfvard's Mässan' is no longer kept either by the Swedish or Norwegian Churches, the day of its

celebration in former times has still great significance with the common people in Dalsland and Wermeland. A man, for instance, must not then labour on his own account.

'*Ers*,' or '*Eric's Mässan*,' the 18th of May, was likewise in Catholic times a great festival in Sweden, having both its fasts and its *profestum*. It was in remembrance of King Eric, who reigned about the middle of the 12th century, and who was in every way a great benefactor to the country. 'The three chief objects he had in view,' says an old chronicle, 'were, to build churches and improve the manner in which the service was conducted; to rule his subjects by law and equity; and to crush the enemies of the throne and people.' But his reign was short, not exceeding, as it is believed, some ten years.

It is recorded of this monarch that one day, when present at the mass in the church of Upsala, intelligence was brought him that the Danish prince, Magnus Henrikson, had unexpectedly attacked the town. He would not leave till Divine service was over. Then, however, he put himself at the head of his warriors, and made a most gallant defence; but he was at length overpowered and taken prisoner, and shortly afterwards decapitated. 'On the spot where his head fell,' we are told, 'there immediately issued forth an abundant spring of clear water, which still exists under the name of "*Eric's Källa*."'

From the many virtues and strict manner of living of this monarch, he was looked on, after death, as holy; and though never canonized, was viewed in the light of Sweden's guardian angel; and both king and people swore by his name, 'So help me God and King Eric.' His memory, indeed, was held in such high veneration, that the laws of

Upland, about the oldest code in Sweden, speak of '*Eric's-frid*,' or 'Eric's peace,' and of the manner in which those shall be punished who molest or insult people when on their way to or from 'St Eric's Mässan.'

The first day in spring, on which the cattle are turned into the forest to graze—for during the long and dreary winter they are confined, as elsewhere said, almost altogether to the cattle-house—has been from time immemorial a great people's festival in Sweden. The time of its celebration, however, depends more or less on the mildness or severity of the season, but for the most part it takes place about the middle of May.

It is ushered in on the preceding evening, when bonfires are made everywhere in the forests, 'it being believed that as far as the light from them extends, the cattle, during the coming summer, will be safe from the attacks of wild beasts.' To keep these at a distance, moreover, the woods are traversed by people during the night, who, in the while, discharge fire-arms, blow horns, and make all kinds of discordant noises.

The manner of celebrating this festival—in places called the feast of flowers—varies somewhat in the different provinces. In Dalsland, which formerly constituted a portion of the province of Wermeland, there prevails a rather singular custom called '*Att Köra Middag*,' the meaning of which is, that the cattle are driven home from the pasture at noon instead of, as usual, in the evening, which is, perhaps, deserving of record.

'At an early hour in the morning the herd-boy, after that his kit has been filled with the best of provisions the house affords, proceeds with his charge to the forest, where,

whilst the cattle are feeding, he decorates their horns with leaves and flowers. He also provides himself with a 'Rönn,' or mountain ash, sapling, which tree, as elsewhere said, is believed to be possessed of mystic qualities.

During his absence from home the girls pluck flowers and form them into a garland, or wreath, which they hang on to the nearest gate to the homestead; and when, at midday, the herd-boy returns with the cattle, and comes to the gate, he takes this wreath from off the post, and fastens it to the end of his sapling. Then, holding the latter in both hands before him, he marches at the head of his charge to the hamlet.

Here he is met by all its inhabitants, who accompany him to the 'cattle-house,' where the beasts are tied to their respective cribs. This operation effected, the herd-boy creeps through the '*Glugg*,' a square opening, 12 to 18 inches in diameter, cut in the wall, and closed with a slide when occasion requires, by which the muck is ejected from the building, and plants the sapling, 'with the wreath of flowers on the top of it, on the muck-heap outside, where it remains during the whole summer.'

The bell is then for the first time tied to the neck of the 'Bell-cow,' and should any of the young cattle be still unchristened, they are struck on the back three several times with the 'sapling' and their names proclaimed aloud.

All the cattle are now treated to the best of hay and other forage, and afterwards the people themselves sit down to an ample repast in the 'Cow-house,' and when this is over, the cattle are once more led to the pasture.

When the cattle are first pastured in the spring, it is usually in the near vicinity of the homestead; but at an

after period, when the grass is pretty well grown in the forest,—such at least is the case in the more northern parts of the country,—the larger portion of the animals are sent to the so-called '*Säter*' (of which every hamlet commonly possesses one or more), which may be at many miles distance, where they remain during the summer.

The 'Säter' is a clearing of some little extent, and is usually fenced off into small allotments pertaining to the several inhabitants of the hamlet. On each of these allotments is a so-called *Säter Stuga,*' or hut, which serves as the temporary residence of those who tend the cattle; as also other small buildings and sheds, as well for the purpose of sheltering the latter on occasion, as of storing away forage, &c. All are constructed of logs, at times squared, but at others not, and are roofed over with turf, shingle, or layers of birch bark.

The removal of the cattle from the homestead to the 'Säter,' in Dalecarlia at least, usually takes place during the first week in June, and is of itself quite an event. 'An intuitive longing, as it were, is awakened in both the people and the animals.' The preparations made by the women keep pace with the bleating of the sheep and goats, and the bellowing of the cattle, whose endeavours to break through the small enclosures near the house, to which in early spring they are confined, are incessant. Two or more girls—called '*Wallhjon*'—the number being regulated by the size of the herd—accompany the cattle, all of which, as also the sheep and goats, are marked on the forehead by a tar-brush with the sign of the cross, an infallible means, it is believed, of protecting them from evil spirits. The 'Bell-cow,' selected for

p. 249.

THE SÄTER STUGA, OR HUT IN THE CLEARING.

her docility, leads the herd; and, as if aware of her responsible office, deports herself with a sort of comic gravity.

Knitting is the chief occupation of the herd-girls during the migration. One of them walks at the head of the cattle to show the way; and, to attach them to her person, she gives them, from time to time, a handful of meal from a pouch carried by her side for the special purpose. Each cow has its name, often pretty and melodious enough; as, for instance, 'May Rose,' 'Gem,' 'Lady Bird,' 'Snowdrop,' 'Welcome,' &c.; and as the girls are constantly ringing the changes on their names, owing to one or other of them straying from the path, the clamour at times is far from inconsiderable.

About noon, and when an open glade, near to which there is water, is reached, a general halt is made, and a fire kindled to keep off the mosquitoes, when the herd-girls 'discuss' their frugal meal, and the cattle, now left to themselves, lie down and ruminate.

Afterwards they proceed on the way, and when arrived at the 'Säter,' the herd-girls regularly take up their abode at the 'Stuga,' the tenement of which mention was recently made.

This is of very small dimensions, say 12 to 14 feet in length by 8 to 10 in width. Once in a while it is provided with a diminutive glazed window; but ninety-nine times out of a hundred the only daylight admitted is through a '*Glugg*.' In one corner of the hut is an open fire-place, built up of loose stones; a low bedstead of rough planks or boards, a shelf or two, and a three-legged stool, usually constitute the whole of the furniture. During the summer, however, one sees a number of wooden bowls

and other utensils pertaining to a dairy; but the greater part of these are removed to the homestead at the fall of the year.

Here the herd-girls remain, as said, throughout the summer. In the mean while, they not only pasture the cattle, but make cheeses, butter, &c., and attend to household affairs, and when the hay-making season arrives, store away, or stack on the spot, such hay as they may be enabled to obtain on the extensive morasses that everywhere stud the northern forests, as also numerous bundles of leafy birch and other twigs, as a winter provision for the cattle. In these occupations, however, they are usually assisted by their master or his serving-men; not unfrequently, indeed, the peasant himself, together with his family, pass much of their time at the 'Säter Stuga.'

Whilst pasturing the cattle, the herd-girls, partly to beguile time, and partly to drive away the bear and wolf, make the woods ring again with their shouts and songs. Ever and anon, moreover, they sound the horn, or rather the '*Lur*,' an elongated tube of birch bark, the long-drawn and mellow notes of which, when heard in the depths of the wild and lonely forest, are exceedingly pleasing, and make a deep impression on the mind.

And their dread of wild beasts is not altogether imaginary; for it not unfrequently happens that when the cattle are grazing in all seeming security, a huge bear rushes suddenly into the midst of the herd. The shouts of the herd-girls and the bellowing of the cattle are then perfectly deafening, so much so as at times to cause the beast to slink away as if ashamed of himself. Should he be famished, however, as often happens after his long

winter fast, all the uproar in the world will not turn him from his deadly purpose, and one or other of the herd is quickly brought to the ground.

The courage shown by the herd-girls on these occasions is often remarkable; and many instances are on record of not only mere youths, but maidens, hasting to the rescue, armed only with a stick; and whilst the ferocious beast has been lying on the body of his victim, actually to have belaboured his sides with the fragile weapon in question. Not unfrequently, however, they have paid dearly for their temerity; for though the brute on these occasions be loth enough to quit his prey, he, for the most part, turns on, and cruelly maltreats his assailants.

The herd-girls, it should be remarked, entertain the singular notion that if the wolf or the bear be called by other than their own proper and legitimate names, they will not attack the cattle. Thus said the wolf when animals were gifted with the power of speech:—

> 'Then call me not wolf,
> Or I'll play the devil.
> Call me thy treasure,
> And I'll be civil.'

Hence '*Smek-namn*,' or caressive names, or such at least as are not offensive, are applied by the herd-girls to the beasts in question. The wolf—amongst other endearing appellations, the number of which is legion, but for the most part untranslatable — is, for instance, called The silent one, Grey legs, Golden tooth; and the bear, The old man, Great father, Twelve men's strength, Golden feet, &c., &c.

To proceed. What with the beauty of the scenery in the vicinity of the 'Säter,' and the somewhat light

duties devolving on those who have the care of the cattle, people who thus pass the most enjoyable season of the year at the 'Säter Stuga' must have a rather agreeable time of it. Not so, however, those who sojourn there alone, or nearly so, in the depth of winter, as has only too frequently been my lot; for there not a human being is to be found within miles, the snow covers the ground to the depth of three or four feet, and to the eye the surrounding scenery is desolation itself.

In the fall of the year, when the harvest is over, and good pasturage obtainable in the stubbles, &c., the cattle again face for the hamlet. 'What a joyous scene the forest then presents! Already from a distance the tinkling of bells is heard, and it would seem as if the animals themselves shared in the delight of their guardians in returning, after their long and solitary summer life, to the more comfortable homestead. The herd-girls, grateful to Providence for the protection vouchsafed to themselves and charge whilst in the lonely and desolate forest, do not forget, on the first Sunday after reaching home, to contribute their mite to "Lazarus,"—the poor box; and to the Church itself they often make a more or less valuable present.'

Ascension day, or Holy Thursday, Sw., which falls 40 days after Easter, is kept by the Swedish Church; and as on this day (as is likewise the case on Holy Trinity day) the peasant women are in the habit of wearing red petticoats, it very frequently goes by the name of '*Röd Söndag*,' or Red Sunday.

In the cathedral town of Skara (and such is, I believe, the case in many other towns in Sweden) it is customary

on Ascension day for the students of the Gymnasium to assemble at sunrise on the balcony of the church, where they sing psalms to wind instruments. The show and the music attract the country people to the town, and by afternoon great numbers are collected, when a singular kind of war (such, at least, used to be the case not very many years ago) is carried on in the streets and in the market-place. The students use their best endeavours to break asunder the walking-sticks of the peasant youths; and, as a somewhat natural consequence, often get their own heads broken in return.

Amongst other superstitions relating to Ascension day, one is 'that the dragon then exposes the hidden treasures that he guards to the light of day, for the purpose of airing them.'

Another, 'that if a person then angles from morn to eve, he will be lucky in fishing throughout the whole year, because he ascertains at which particular hour the fish bite best; for at that very hour during every succeeding day during the summer they will take the bait freely.'

Whitsuntide, or the feast of Pentecost, '*Pingst*,' which occurs seven weeks after Easter, is a festival with the Swedish Church, though not on the same scale as the latter, or 'Jul.' Formerly the religious observances extended over three days, but now are, I believe, restricted to two.

On Whit Sunday all the churches in the rural districts are decorated with green boughs, and the altar, the pulpit, and many of the pews with flowers. 'In the Härad of Skytt,' says Lovèn, 'it was formerly the duty of the parishioners thus to embellish the sacred edifice from this day forward until Midsummer, or, at least, to place bouquets of fresh

flowers on the altar and pulpit, which the clergyman, on his descent from the pulpit, always took home with him. It would have been looked on as an affront by those who deposited the flowers on the altar,' he goes on to say, 'had he left them unnoticed; one could never have supposed they had been forgotten, and must necessarily conclude they were despised.'

Though Whit Monday is a holy day in Sweden, the peasants rather look on it as the commencement of their summer games and pastimes. It is true they pretty regularly attend church in the morning. In Scania and elsewhere, indeed, people proceed there in procession to the sound of musical instruments; but the afternoon is usually devoted to amusements.

Near to the town of Lidköping, in Westergötland, where a place is set apart for the recreation of the public, —a 'Trysting place,' as it is called in Scotland,—the favourite pastime consists in a youth and a maiden embracing each other, and, whilst in this most agreeable of positions, rolling down the hill together, Greenwich fashion.

Trinity Sunday (*Helig Trefaldighets Dag*, Sw.), though a great festival in Sweden during Catholic times, is at present merely observed as an ordinary sabbath.

It may be mentioned, however, that within three or four miles of the collegiate town of Upsala, there is a very celebrated fountain called '*Trefaldighets Källare*,' the waters of which, from time immemorial, have been believed to possess such extraordinary virtues, that all those who imbibe them on Trinity Sunday are, if previously invalided, restored to health, and endowed, moreover, with long life! Hence the town's-people in crowds, and the peasants

from the neighbouring parishes in thousands, then flock to the healing spring, where, after the object of their pilgrimage is accomplished, they form picnics, and otherwise amuse themselves as best they may.

As may well be supposed this great gathering of people form no little attraction to the gownsmen of the university, many of whom, later in the day, are in the habit of proceeding to the fountain in question, where they mix with the crowd and take part in the general hilarity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MIDSUMMER.

MIDSUMMER VIGILS.—PREPARATIONS IN COUNTRY;—IN STOCKHOLM.—THE LEAF MARKET.—BALDER'S FIRES.—THE MAJ STÄNG, OR MAY-POLE.—THE DANCE.—PICNIC IN NORRLANDS.—SACRED SPRINGS.—THEIR VIRTUES.—LEGENDS.—THE IMMOVABLE CROSS.—PARSON MELCHIOR.—THE LADY OF HUSHBERGET.—MYSTIC NIGHT.—SUPERSTITIONS.—THE STAG RUTA.—MIDSUMMER QVAST.—THE PANCAKE AND MISTLETOE.—MIDSUMMER DAY.

MIDSUMMER day—in Sweden called '*St Hans' Dag*,' (*Hans* being an abbreviation of *Johannes*, or John)—is kept by the Swedish Church. Though instituted in remembrance of the Baptist, it is believed to be ingrafted, as with 'Jul,' Easter, and others, on a great festival of the ancient Scandinavians, which took place at about the same season of the year—on that, as it is generally supposed, in honour of *Balder*, the good, the god of light, or of the sun. Be this as it may, many heathen customs and superstitions, together with others probably coeval with the early ages of Christianity, still prevail, as will shortly be seen, during its continuance. Dr Wieselgren says 'that the festival of Midsummer, as at present celebrated in Sweden, is neither more nor less than the "Bride's Feast" of the heathen; that so late as 1710 the bishop, Dr Lund, warned the people of Wernamo not to

keep Midsummer "*Vaken*," that is, watch or vigils, as used to be the case on the night of the feast of the Dedication; that not very long ago it used to be the custom for a youth to watch at a cross road on midsummer night, that he might see two female figures approach,—the one his bride to be, and the other Freja, the goddess of matrimony, who presented her to him; and that in parts of the province of Blekinge they still select a midsummer's bride, to whom the "church coronet" is at times lent; that the girl herself selects a bridegroom, and that a collection is made for the pair, who, for the time being, are looked on as man and wife. The other youths choose each his bride; but all this is in the way of play.'

Great preparations are made to celebrate this festival. On the preceding evening, 'St Hans' eve,' as it is usually called in Sweden, the houses of the peasantry, and others, are thoroughly purified, and the rooms and passages '*Löfvas*,' or '*Majas*,' that is, are garnished with green boughs and flowers. The floors are also strewed with leaves, or with sprigs of the spruce pine, or of juniper chopped, as said, into small particles. Young fir trees, moreover, are raised at the doorway and elsewhere about the homestead, and very frequently small umbrageous arbours are constructed in the little garden near to the house.

The townspeople are not greatly behind the peasantry in celebrating Midsummer. In Stockholm, on St Hans' eve, a so-called Leaf-market is held near to Munkbro, the Bridge of Monks, where are exposed for sale not only leafy boughs and bouquets of flowers, but thousands of diminutive '*Maj Stänger*,' usually translated May-pole (see Chap.

III., p. 34), of from 6 inches to 12 feet in height. The leaves, flowers, slips of coloured paper, gilt egg-shells strung on reeds, &c., with which they are decorated, together with the '*Wimple*,' or vane, for the most part embellished with gold leaf, that waves on the top, gives them a singular and picturesque appearance. Then again, the vast number of boats, freighted with green branches, that are ranged close to each other alongside the quays, form quite a verdant fleet.

'If one takes a walk in the streets of the capital on Midsummer's eve,' says an intelligent traveller, 'the sight that meets the eye is a remarkable one. The shops—the greater part at least—are, from an early hour in the morning, ornamented with green boughs and leaves; and over the doorway is erected a sort of triumphal arch, from the centre of which often hangs a crown, or wreath, composed of 'Blue Bottle' (*Centauris Cyamus*). The floors and passages, moreover, are strewed with fragrant meadow-sweet (*Ulmaria*), and in the court-yard of some one also notices small umbrageous bowers. The girls who row the passage-boats from the one island to the other (Stockholm is built on no less than seven) decorate their little craft with boughs and flowers; the dray-men their horses and drays with the like; and even the emaciated "hack-horses,"—the most miserable of all living beings within the gates of this city,—have their heads ornamented with bunches of leaves; at every step one meets a child, its face beaming with joy and gladness, bearing in its hand a doll, a penny trumpet, or the like; and in almost all instances a '*Maj Stäng*' also. From the harbour or the market-place come servant-maids with provisions, &c., for the approaching

festival. Some are alone, but others in attendance on their mistresses; but there is hardly one amongst them who has not in her hand a wreath of "Blue Bottle," or "Forget-me-not,' or at least a little branch of "Meadow Sweet," or other fragrant flower.

St Hans' eve is, in Sweden, the most joyous night of the whole year. In parts of the country, more especially in the provinces of Bohus and Scania, and in districts bordering on Norway, in which country Balder was worshipped, it is celebrated by the frequent discharge of fire-arms, and also by huge bonfires,—formerly called '*Balder's Bălar*,' symbols of the obsequies of that god, whose body was consumed on an immense funeral pyre,—which are kindled at dusk on hills and eminences, and throw a glare of light over the face of all the surrounding country. It is remarkable that it is still the custom to dance around, and jump over and through, these fires, reminding one of the ancient feasts of Baal or Moloch, when the worshippers are described as passing through the fire to Moloch.

The great attraction of the evening, however, is the 'Maj Stăng,' one of which in the rural districts is raised at Midsummer in nearly every large hamlet, as also near to the residence of most large landed proprietors.

This consists of a straight and tall spruce-pine tree—often of the thickness of a man's body at the base—divested of its branches. At times hoops, and at others pieces of wood, placed crosswise, are attached to it at intervals; whilst at others it is provided with bows, representing, so to say, a man with his arms akimbo. From top to bottom not only the "Maj Stăng" itself, but the hoops, bows, &c.,

are ornamented with leaves, flowers, slips of various cloth, gilt egg-shells, &c.; and on the top of it is a cock or a large vane, or it may be a flag, commonly white or red, on which is inscribed the name of the Apostle John, or that of the hamlet, and date.

Some of these votive pillars, if the expression may be used, are thought to be symbolic of *Sun-worship;* as, for instance, the garlands being made to represent triangles and wheels with spokes, these forms being known to represent the sun, at least amongst the Egyptians and Phœnicians. The wheel with rays being still the sign of the sun, and the obelisk, or pointed pillar, is also supposed to have had the same signification.

The raising of the 'Maj Stäng,' which has been previously decorated by the maidens of the village, is attended with much ceremony, and to the sound of the violin or other musical instrument, in which while guns, or it may be small cannon, are repeatedly discharged.

People from all quarters flock to the 'Maj Stäng,' and, after forming a great ring, dance around it. 'Every one enters into the amusement, from the old grandmother to the child of three years old, the unrestrained wing of gladness being extended over all. Every care is then forgotten, and one abandons oneself solely to the enjoyment of the hour.'

The dance over, for the time at least, they sit down to the evening repast, and when this is ended, they either dance again or amuse themselves as best they may, it being the custom for every one on this festive occasion to remain up and moving during the whole night.

In the town of Lulea, in Norrlands, families on St Hans'

eve are accustomed to repair to a hill in the vicinity called '*Mjölkudds Berget,*' where they light a number of small fires. Those that now blaze, however, are not fires in honour of the god Balder, but simply to prepare coffee. Each family party collects around its own little fire; but the coffee-pan must not be placed on it until the sun is about to sink below the horizon: and before the coffee is boiled that luminary has again risen; for at this season of the year, in these high latitudes, the queen of light is so unwearied in illuming the inhabitants of the Fjälls that she hardly gives herself a moment's rest.

Some, again, direct their steps to certain mystic fonts called '*Offer Källor,*' or sacrificial springs, so named because in heathen times the limbs of the slaughtered victim, whether man or beast, were here washed prior to immolation. Here, also, the priestesses of the neighbouring temple counselled the people both in regard to their sicknesses and worldly affairs, and as a consequence these fonts were looked on as holy. When, however, Christianity was introduced into Sweden, now, as said, upwards of a thousand years ago, the monks erected near to each of these springs the image of one or other of their saints, making the people believe the waters were under the special protection of the latter, and encouraged them to make gifts to themselves in like manner as to the priestesses of old.

Near to certain other springs, also, these men erected crosses, under the pretext that miracles had been wrought at them. These were called Fonts of the Cross and of the Holy Trinity. In Catholic times these springs were believed to be possessed of extraordinary virtues, as, for

instance, that at sunrise their waters were converted into wine; and, in consequence, they were much resorted to on particular days in the year. The people said their prayers before the saint, or the cross, as the case might be; and after the priest had troubled the waters with a crucifix, they either drank of the limpid stream, or sprinkled a portion of it on their persons. Prior to this, however, they were accustomed to repeat a certain formula. No later, indeed, than Midsummer eve, 1671, as shown by authentic documents in the Skara Museum, the following words were chanted or sung at 'Ingemo Källa,' a holy fountain in Westergotland:

> 'For this cause came I here,
> To seek a cure with the greatest diligence,
> At this fountain and in this grove,
> As many do at this time.'

To the mystic springs in question, which by the common people are still believed to retain many of the virtues attributed to them of old, numbers, as said, are accustomed to repair on St Hans' eve, and certain other nights of the year, partly, it is true, for recreation, dances, and other pastimes being often carried on in their vicinity, but chiefly in the hope of obtaining relief from their ailments. 'At times,' says M. Afselius, 'one sees thousands from distant parts flocking to the more celebrated of the sacred springs, bearing with them the halt, the blind, and the diseased, that they may either imbibe the healing waters or lave their limbs in the little rill that runs from them. Many, moreover, after drinking of the precious liquid, cast small coins into the "Holy Font," as an "offering," and many carry home a portion of the water, which is looked on as a never-failing elixir.'

Regarding the crosses raised by the monks near to these sacred springs there are many legends.

In the Church of Torp, in Bohus-Län, for instance, one is still preserved that formerly stood near a 'Cross Font,' not far from the sea-shore, of which it is said, 'that all attempts to move it from the spot proved abortive until the promise was given that it should be conveyed to the sacred edifice above-mentioned.' „

Independently, however, of these so-called 'Holy crosses,' one at times meets with others commemorative of a murder, or the like; or, it may be, to mark the scene of some extraordinary event. Such a cross is now in the church of Wickholm, respecting which there is the following tradition.

'About three hundred years ago there lived a godly man named Melchior, who was pastor of that parish. It was his custom, let the weather be what it might, to repair every evening to the neighbouring church to say his prayers before the altar. His wife, thinking these constant petitions to Heaven somewhat superfluous, said one evening to the servant, "'Dear Lars, if thou wilt disguise thyself as a ghost, and station thyself in the church-yard when thy master comes out of the sacred edifice, thou shalt have a flagon of ale!" The man, in obedience to his mistress' commands, donned a white sheet, and confronted Melchior in the path. The virtuous pastor, on seeing the spirit, commenced praying aloud, and, as he proceeded, it began gradually to sink into the earth! Melchior then inquired, "Who and what art thou?" but the apparition replied not. The pastor then recommenced praying, on which the servant, who by this time had sunk into the

earth up to the middle, called out his name. "It is now too late," said Melchior, and presently the unfortunate man disappeared altogether!

'The wife of the worthy pastor, who survived her husband some years, was said to be of noble extraction, and was buried with her relatives in Hatteras church-yard; but when long afterwards the grave was examined, it was found that though the coffin and shroud had rotted away, the body had not in any way undergone decomposition! Hence she was supposed to be still in purgatory, "it being the belief of the times, that the soul of a person could never be delivered from thence until his body had returned to dust."'

Again, on '*Husberget*,' a celebrated hill near to Enköping, an iron cross is said to have stood erect within the memory of man, regarding which we have the following curious legend.

'In former times a giantess, keeping guard over a vast treasure, was believed to dwell in this hill, and she was therefore called the Lady of Husberget. At "Gröngarn," near to "Stora Ena," resided a widow woman, who was mean and avaricious to the last degree. One evening she and her servant proceeded to Husberget, when, tying a rope about the man's waist, she compelled him to descend into a fearful chasm, still shown to travellers, in the hill-side, where he was directed to collect the hidden wealth. This first attempt succeeded, and he returned with a basket filled with gold and other valuables. When, however, in spite of his remonstrance, his mistress compelled him a second time to descend into the enchanted cavern, he never appeared again; but, on the withdrawal of the rope by which he had

been let down into the abyss, a dead horse, instead of himself, was found attached to the end of it.

'The cross,' we are further told, 'was erected in memory of the unfortunate man, and that with the riches abstracted by him from the treasure-house of the "Troll" was built "*Vär* free" church, situated on the opposite side of the inlet.'

St Hans' eve is not only the most joyous, but the most mystic, night of the whole year.

In parts of Norrland, for instance, great fires are then made at the cross-roads. The pile consists of nine different kinds of wood, and they cast into the flames a species of toad-stool, called '*Bäran*,' so named after certain emissaries of Satan, of whom more elsewhere, for the purpose of nullifying the power of the 'Troll,' and other evil spirits, who on this and certain other nights are more especially believed to be abroad; for the mountains then open, and, issuing from their cavernous depths, they dance and otherwise enjoy themselves. It is further believed that if the 'Troll' be in the vicinity of these mystic fires they will show themselves; and should it so happen that a certain animal—a he or a she goat, for instance—is seen near to the fires, the people fully believe that, though thus guised, it is no other than the evil one himself!

On this night, also, as on that preceding Christmas-day, people go 'Ärs gäng' (the mystic journey spoken of in Chapter XIII.), 'when they see and hear many wonderful things.'

Then, again, should there be any one sick in the family, sheets and linen cloths are spread out in the church-yard, to collect the dew, 'which are afterwards wound around

the body of the patient, and the cure is believed to be effected.'

And instead of yeast to raise the dough, the dew in question must be substituted.

On this very night, moreover, people, wrapped up in sheets, proceed to the forest or the fields, 'to ascertain from the notes of certain birds what is about to happen.'

For the like purpose, and similarly attired, they lie on the house-top in silence, 'when much hidden matter is revealed to them.'

And if a person be desirous of knowing whether gladness or sorrow be in store for him, he on this evening proceeds to a corn-field, and selects two stalks of equal length. To the one (gladness) he ties a red band, and to the other (sorrow) a black one. 'The stalk that in the morning overtops its fellow indicates his fate.'

On this night, moreover, the corn-fields must '*Löfvas*,' that is, a leafy branch, or twig, be raised in each furrow, 'by which means an abundant crop will be insured.'

And, to rid a field of grubs, 'a stick with which a snake has been killed must then be inserted in the ground.'

It is on 'St Hans' eve,' also, that the so-called '*Slag Ruta*,' the mystic implement with which the treasure-seeker discovers wealth hidden under-ground, must be prepared, if it is to be possessed of the needful power.

The 'Slag Ruta' is of square form, from 18 to 24 inches in diameter, and is constructed of four sticks dove-tailed into each other at the ends. But these four sticks must consist of as many different kinds of mystic wood, viz.: of a sapling of mountain-ash that has implanted itself (the

seed having been conveyed by a bird or wafted by the wind) in the mould, or rather vegetable matter, collected in the hollow root of a fallen tree; of a shoot of the aspen tree, of which wood our Saviour's cross is believed to have consisted; of mistletoe, with a shaft whereof Balder, the good god, was, as related in the Scandinavian mythology, slain by his brother Hoder; and of a fourth kind of wood, the name of which has escaped me.

Provided with the 'Slag Ruta,' the treasure-seeker after sundown proceeds to the spot where he expects to find hidden wealth, when he lays the mystic implement on the ground, first in one place, and then in another, and when at length it rests directly over the coveted treasure, it will of itself begin to move as if alive! But the operation must be conducted in profound silence, for should the man speak a single word, or make the slightest noise, the charm —for that night at least—is at once broken, and his labours will prove vain.

The legends regarding the wonderful discoveries made by the mystic 'Slag Ruta' are many, but space admits not of their insertion in these pages.

On 'St Hans' eve,' besides, people gather nine different kinds of flowers, not forgetting 'Johannes-Gras' (*Hypericum*), which is supposed to possess extraordinary virtues, and afterwards to make them up into a bouquet called a Midsummer '*Qvast.*' But whilst thus occupied one must be quite alone, and, as when going 'Ärs-gäng,' perfectly silent. Even should one meet a person, and be spoken to by him, signs must be the sole reply; under no circumstances whatever must one open one's mouth.

The Midsummer 'Qvast' contains within itself no end

of wonderful properties. Fathers of families suspend such to the rafters of their dwellings, one for each of its inmates; and the 'Qvast' that withers first indicates the individual that is first doomed to die.

The 'Qvast' is also hung up in the cattle-house, as a sure protection against the 'Troll;' and as it is supposed to retain its virtues for a whole year, it is usually allowed to remain there until the following summer, when it is replaced by a fresh one.

In places, moreover, a decoction is made from it, which is looked on as a panacea for all disorders.

And as regards the tender passion, the 'Midsummer Qvast' is believed to be possessed of virtues of no ordinary kind. When, for instance, a Dalecarlian girl is desirous of ascertaining her future fate, she makes the specified number of flowers into a wreath, or bouquet, which, on her return home, she places under her pillow. What she now dreams of will certainly come to pass; and what can the pretty creature dream about but a lover? And such as the youth there appears to her will be he who afterwards sits beside her on the nuptial stool in church.

But maidens on this mystic evening have other methods of solving the knotty point in question, one of which is by means of a pancake prepared in the following manner. Three girls must always take part in concocting this delicacy. Jointly they bring from the cupboard the bowl to hold the several ingredients; break asunder the eggs, pour in the milk, add the meal and the salt (of which each usually throws in so much as to render the cake most unpalatable), and hold the cream-whip, when the whole is

blended together. All the three must, moreover, lend a helping hand at the frying-pan when the cake is turned; and during the whole process not a single word must be spoken.

The pancake, when duly baked, is cut into three equal parts, when each maiden discusses her share. Subsequently they all turn into bed; but however thirsty they may be after the salt, they must nevertheless drink only in their dreams. During these, however, handsome youths will appear, and present them with some delicious beverage or other. These youths will afterwards be husbands to the dreaming girls.

But the above are not the only means at the disposal of a love-sick maiden on this eventful evening to read her fate; for if she, wrapped in a white sheet, mounts on to the roof of the house, and lies down with a basin and towel in her hand, she will presently see her sweetheart to be, who will come to make his ablutions.

Or if she, in silence, seats herself on a stone, and listens attentively, the first sound that reaches her ears will proceed from the direction in which resides her future lover.

Mistletoe on 'St Hans' eve' is also diligently sought after, they believing it to be, in a high degree, possessed of mystic qualities; and that if a sprig of it be attached to the ceiling of the dwelling-house, the horse's stall, or the cow's crib, the 'Troll' will then be powerless to injure either man or beast.

Of Midsummer day itself there is little to relate, other than that the rural churches, as with the houses of the

peasantry, are then decorated with leaves and flowers. But the day is not kept very strictly; for, divine service over, people amuse themselves as best they can—with picnic parties, or the like, in the forest or the field, where they gather no end of flowers.

CHAPTER XIX.

FESTIVALS FROM JUNE TO CHRISTMAS.

CHEESE MEETINGS.—ST PETER'S DAY.—LEGENDS OF ST PETER.—ST OLAF'S DAY.—OLAF'S LIFE.—MIRACLES WROUGHT BY HIS BODY.—ALTAR-PIECE REPRESENTING HIM AS HE TRIUMPHED OVER A TROLL.—LEGEND OF THE ALTAR-PIECE.—HOP-PICKING.—EVENING SEASONS FOR TALE-TELLING.—ST MICHAEL'S DAY, AND SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING IT.—HARVEST HOME.—ST LUCIE'S DAY.—LEGEND OF ST LUCIE.—THE TIARA OF LIGHT.

'*Ost möte,*' or the cheese meeting, which usually takes place towards the end of June, is, in parts of the country, though in a small way, a people's festival; and, to judge by the following description by an eye-witness, must be a sight well worth seeing.

'In Småland the clergyman is entitled, on one evening of the year, to all the milk then produced by his parishioners' cows,—the goodness of which milk, owing to the quantity thus collected and the richness of the pastures, renders the cheeses of that province so famous. A large number of these cheeses used to be brought for sale by the clergy to Wexio, where in former times they were frequently convoked to meet the bishop, and such meetings were in consequence jocularly called "cheese meetings."

'Those resident in the part of the parish nearest to the church were expected to bring their milk to the parsonage

on "Midsummer eve." At about nine o'clock in the evening one saw maidens flocking there from all sides, bearing on their heads wooden milk-pails, scoured beautifully clean, and the lids of which were fringed with oak leaves, to prevent the milk from shaking.

'The girls from Wärend—who retain their fine Grecian profile—are clad in white linen, their usual holiday dress, but so lightly that a shift, reaching to the ground, often constitutes their sole attire. Modesty, nevertheless, is very carefully attended to, for this garment, downwards from the waist, where it is secured by a girdle, falls in folds in like manner as a gown; whilst at the neck is a collar secured to the bosom by a silver brooch. In slighter dresses the Arcadian shepherdesses never appeared at their ring-dances.

'The milk is strained into large tubs, and after the maidens have been entertained at the parsonage they repair to the *Socken-stuga*,' or house common to all the inhabitants of the parish, to enjoy the pleasures of the dance. The youths invited to meet them are clad in embroidered jackets of Chamois leather, spruce buckskin nether garments, buckled at the knee, and parti-coloured garters tasselled at the end; and the ball is kept up with spirit, and to the enjoyment of every one, until the uprising sun warns the company to depart.

'The cheeses, under the superintendence of the clergyman's lady, are now ready; and such of the girls as so desire fill their milk-pails with curds and whey, when they return, happy and contented, to their homes.'

St Peter's day, the 29th of June, though now no longer kept, was in Catholic times one of the greatest festivals of

the Swedish Church, having its days of preparation, its vigils, and its fasts. In the town of Strängnäs it was held specially sacred, as shown by the old Södermanland laws, which inflicted a heavy penalty on those who then disturbed the public peace.

Many legends respecting St Peter are treasured up by the Swedish peasantry, and amongst the rest the following:—

'Whilst the apostle was a prisoner in Rome, during the reign of the Emperor Nero, he was on one occasion, by some unaccountable means, released from his bonds. When thus at liberty, and wandering about the country, he met Jesus. Overjoyed at the sight, he cried out, "Lord, where goest Thou?" "To Rome, to be crucified for the second time," replied the Redeemer. Peter then became aware that from faint-heartedness he had avoided suffering and martyrdom; wherefore he forthwith returned to his prison, and was afterwards condemned to die on the cross. When, however, he was about to be executed, he prayed his tyrants they would not crucify him in like manner as his Lord and Master, as of such a death he was not worthy. He was therefore nailed to the cross with his head downwards, thus glorifying our Saviour with a brilliant martyrdom, which he suffered with patience and heroism. Over his grave, and in memory of him, was erected the largest and most magnificent temple in the world, which is called after him "St Peter's Church."'

It is again said of this apostle, 'that when a certain pope, not by any means famous for his good deeds whilst on earth, presented himself at the gates of Paradise, and requested admittance, Peter replied, "Open the doors thy-

self; thou sayest thou hast the keys in thy own possession." "That's true," rejoined his Holiness, "but Luther has now so altered the lock that they will no longer fit." '

We are further told, that on a certain occasion Peter was in a ship in company with fifteen Jews and fifteen Christians, when so violent a storm arose that, for the safety of the rest, it was determined to cast one half of them overboard. The apostle then formed the thirty passengers in line, and every ninth man was cast into the sea; but he had so cleverly arranged them—as shown by the annexed Runic tablet—that the unbelievers alone perished. We may suppose them thus placed, C representing Christians, and J Jews.

C C C C J J J J J C C J C C C J C J J C C J J J C J J C C J=30
14 4 7 12 1 10 5 2 8 13 15 11 6 3 9

The numbers show in what order they would be drowned.

But the most singular legend respecting St Peter is that generally known under the name of the 'Jerusalem Shoemaker,' which runs thus:—

'On one occasion, when the apostle and our Saviour were wandering together on earth, they came to the house of a virtuous shoemaker, whose wife was most frightfully ugly, but who, nevertheless, was loved and cherished by her husband, as if she were the perfection of beauty. She was, however, sensible and amiable, and gave her unknown guests a most kind and welcome reception, wherefore blessings afterwards descended on the fortunate couple. But Peter, greatly wondering how the shoemaker should not perceive the woman's personal imperfections, inquired of his Master the "cause of the man's

blindness?" "That I will permit thee thyself to experience," replied the Saviour, and at the same instant tranformed St Peter's eyes into those of the shoemaker. When now the apostle looked at the woman she appeared so lovely and fascinating that he felt all the agonies of love, a passion he had never before experienced; and he therefore petitioned our Lord "to restore him his own proper eyes, that he might be relieved from the anguish he was enduring." His prayer was granted, and he was once more himself. From this time forward, however, the apostle never again wondered at the love of the human heart, but thanked God that an object which was ugly and forbidding in the eyes of one man might, in those of another, be everything that was pleasing and delightful.'

Nor were superstitions wanting in the olden times as regarded St Peter's day, on which was also celebrated the memory of St Paul; for on the Runic staff is marked a bunch of flowers, because 'on that day one should pluck such herbs as can be used as medicine, or as an antidote to "*Trolldom.*"'

'*Olafs Mëssan,*' which fell on the 29th of July, was, in Popish times, a great religious festival in Norway, as also in most of the provinces of Sweden; and was celebrated both with its vigils, fastings, &c. It was instituted in honour of King Olaf Haraldson, commonly called the 'Holy,' who ruled Norway in the eleventh century, and who rendered himself remarkable by his zealous and strenuous endeavours to spread Christianity, then but recently introduced into the country. He was a great warrior, and withal grim and fierce; and ended his

days at the famous battle of *Sticklastad*, fought on the 1st of July, 1030. His corpse was privily buried by a faithful follower on a wild sandy heath, at some little distance from where he fell. When, however, the grave was opened, a year and five days afterwards, for the purpose of transporting the body to Drontheim, where his obsequies were celebrated with great pomp and solemnity, the coffin was found not only as new in appearance as if deposited in the ground on the preceding day, but that it had risen of itself to near the surface; as also, that the countenance of the king, whose nails and beard had grown considerably in the interim, looked as fresh and blooming as if he were only sleeping; all which filled the lookers-on with awe and astonishment,—no one paying attention to the sensible remark of a bystander, 'that corruption in a sandy soil takes place very slowly.'

Numberless miracles were, moreover, said to have been wrought by Olaf's body after death, as for instance, 'How that a few drops of the king's blood which had fallen on his "baneman," Thored Hord, had been the means of at once healing the wounds of the latter.' 'How that a blind man who had washed his eyes with Olaf's blood had his sight immediately restored.' 'How that many persons who in their distress and agony had called on the monarch's name, had forthwith received relief from pain,' &c., &c. All these tales being firmly believed, coupled with the extraordinary appearance of Olaf's corpse and coffin when exhumed, soon caused him to be looked on as '*Helig*,' or holy, and to be worshipped accordingly; and when, at an after-period, a clear spring gushed forth on the heath where he was interred in the first instance, the sick and the

maimed flocked in crowds to the spot to drink of its healing waters.

'This superstitious veneration after death for Olaf, who, during the latter part of his life, had been so generally hated and detested,' remarks a Swedish historian, 'did more towards the establishment of Christianity in Norway than all the violent and unjustifiable means adopted by him to effect that object.'

In several of the old churches both in Sweden and Norway are '*altar-pieces*' (enclosed in a sort of press with folding-doors, so that their contents can be exhibited when occasion requires), consisting of carved work, generally representing the sufferings of Christ, the death of the martyrs, the miracles performed by the saints, and the like. In one of the four compartments of that at Köping, in Sweden, stands the Virgin Mary, with two angels holding a golden crown over her head as Queen of Heaven; next to her on the right is a king, with coronet and mantle—this is Olaf the Holy. In his right hand is a chalice, and in his left a long battle-axe, symbolical of his missionary and warrior life; he is represented as trampling on a 'Troll,' with human head, dragon body, and fearful talons. Of the manner in which the monster came under the monarch's feet we have the following curious legend:

'Near to the harbour of Drontheim the king laid the foundation of a church, so large that seven clergymen, without disturbing each other, could, at one and the same time, preach in as many different languages! But soon both means and an architect were wanting to complete the edifice. Olaf, in his perplexity, wandered one

day in the forest in the hopes of meeting some one who would help him out of his great difficulties. Then came a "Troll" from the bowels of the mountain, and proffered his services to the king! He was willing, he said, to undertake the erection of the church in question on these conditions, viz.: that if Olaf, during its construction, should discover his (the "Troll's") name, he would be the sovereign's captive; but if, on the contrary, the building was finished by a given day, and that a very early one, he (the giant) should receive, as remuneration for his labour, "either the sun and the moon, or Olaf himself!" The king agreed to the "Troll's" proposal, because he thought it utterly impossible that so immense a structure as was designed by him could be finished in so short a time.

'To his utter amazement, however, it was ready on the day specified by the giant, with the exception of the weather-cock, which had still to be placed on the top of the tower. Olaf then went again into the wilderness, even more sorrowful than on the former occasion. But when he came near the mountain spoken of, he heard within it a child cry, and the giantess quieting it with these words, "Hush! hush! son of mine. To-morrow thy father, '*Skalle*,' will return home with the sun and the moon, or King Olaf himself." The sovereign now knew the "Troll's" name, and returned to Drontheim rejoicing.

'The giant was just about raising the weather-cock on the church, when the king called out to him, "Skalle, place it aright." On hearing these words the "Troll" purposely threw himself headlong from the tower, in the hopes that in his fall he might crush Olaf; but the latter, stepping

aside, drove his battle-axe into the giant's knee, so that he afterwards had no difficulty in making him prisoner.

'This monster,' we are further told, 'lay bound in chains as long as he lived under the king's banqueting-table, where he was fed, and hence was called Olaf's sucking calf!'

In other two compartments of the altar-piece in question the king is seen in his celebrated ship, '*Det Underbara,*' or 'the wonderful,' which is said 'to have sailed equally well over forests, mountains, and valleys, as on the water!' Around the monarch stand his men, and an angel is seated in the rigging. With this ship, we are told, 'Olaf sailed along the whole of the Norwegian coast, for the purpose of extirpating the "Troll," some of whom he slew with the sword, and others he transformed into stones.'

Of the altar-piece itself there is also a legend.

'Originally it is said to have graced the cathedral at Drontheim, but when Eric XIV. of Sweden warred against Norway and captured that city, he commanded that it should be conveyed from thence to Stockholm. When, however, it reached *Köping*, in Sweden, it became so miraculously heavy, that though oxen and horses without number were put in requisition, the carriage on which it rested was not to be moved from the spot; and from that day to this it has therefore remained as an ornament to the church in the last-named town.'

There are many superstitions respecting St Olaf's day. People say, for example, that should it fall at the full of the moon there will be a good 'snow-winter,' that is, abundance of snow will fall in the forests and elsewhere, a great

desideratum in northern countries, the transit of timber by means of sledges being thereby greatly facilitated.

Hop-picking evenings, which in Sweden occur about September, as with 'Ost Möten,' or the cheese meetings spoken of at the commencement of this chapter, are also in parts of the country a sort of people's festival; and, to judge from the following account given of it by an eye-witness, of a very pleasing description.

'In the province of Kronoberg, where they grow considerable quantities of hops, plucking them from the "bines" form, in the season, a chief evening occupation at the parsonage. At dusk, and whilst a large log-fire was being kindled in the hall, the serving-men were engaged in bringing in the "bines," and piling them up in large heaps before it. Presently afterwards the several members of the family gathered about the fire, and, with the exception of the clergyman and his lady, all were busily engaged in the way spoken of above.

'But as this employment, which lasted until 10 or 11 o'clock, and was continued for several consecutive evenings, tended to make people sleepy, the company were in the while treated to ale, &c.; and the better to keep the eyes open, every one was enjoined to relate some tale or other.

'The parson himself always "opened the ball," and was followed by the curate, his daughters, and the men and maid servants. All were prepared, having previously treasured up anything amusing they might have heard for the occasion. One might fancy being present at an Icelandic evening meeting. The manner in which the family were accustomed to treat their servants did away with all feeling of restraint, and each one was

ready to contribute to the general amusement. All were attentive to the narrator, and when he had finished his tale, the next individual in order commenced with the usual prologue, "Once on a time there was," &c., &c. This freedom of intercourse was very serviceable in uniting servants and masters, so that the family formed one heart and one soul, so to say. And there was no house where the servants exhibited more attachment and fidelity to their employer than the clergyman's, where all looked on themselves as the children, and the master and mistress as the parents.'

The tales in question showed clearly the prevailing bias of the minds of the common people; and many useful reflections might be drawn therefrom. The more special subjects were, 'a bad step-mother, who oppressed her step-daughter, favouring at the same time her own child, who, however, could never succeed in getting a husband; the rich who, through their ambition and avarice, were finally reduced to poverty, whilst the poor in their contentedness, on the contrary, became wealthy and happy,' &c. Then followed legends of the monks, and of St Peter, who had much to do in distributing his gifts, and, provided the requests preferred to him were not unwise, every one received that for which he asked. Afterwards appeared on the scene the stupid servant, who fulfilled to the letter the commands of his master, thereby creating no ends of ridiculous blunders and mistakes. Fabulous times, when animals possessed the faculty of speech, was another of the topics, in which the horse, the cow, the sheep, &c., held consultation as to their masters' circumstances, &c., &c. Stories relating to the

'*Skogs Rä*' and the '*Tomte Gubbar*' (fabulous beings spoken of elsewhere), in whose existence the people of the district entertained the most implicit belief, were also introduced.

'But it was a great pleasure to hear one or other of the youth in his simple narrative display so much boldness of speech, and at the same time expose his character to view. It was in this way, also, that the clergyman had opportunity to study the disposition of his parishioners, for "sagas," or tales, which under ordinary circumstances circulated only amongst themselves, were at the meetings in question told without reserve.'

'*St Michael's Mässan,*' or St Michael's day, which formerly fell on the 29th of September, was instituted in honour of the archangel Michael, of whom it is related in Jude 9 that he fought with the devil for the dead body of Moses.

In Popish times it was celebrated in Sweden with a separately proclaimed service, which service in the years 1571, 1686, and 1741 (that is, subsequently to the Reformation) was confirmed, and the day was looked upon as one of the greatest solemnity. By royal ordinance of 1742 it was directed to be kept on the nearest Sunday, but I am not aware of any particular religious observances then taking place.

'The object of its solemnization is,' we are told, 'that we should be informed of the nature of the holy angels, and of their good intentions towards us; and to remind us in what manner we should conduct ourselves if desirous of benefiting by their protection; as also that we should seek comfort from them against the power and

artifices of Satan, and encourage us to praise God for vouchsafing us the guardianship of these holy beings.

Of 'St Michael's Mässan' we are reminded by the fairs held at this season of the year in various parts of the country, which are ushered in and terminate (as the 'Lur' on the Runic staff shows was the case formerly) by the blowing of horns, &c., &c.

There are various superstitions in regard to this festival.

On St Michael's eve, for instance, the horses must be taken up from pasture, 'if they are to have smooth coats during the winter.'

And on St Michael's day itself many prognostics are drawn from the state of the weather. Should the wind be then northerly or easterly, 'the winter will be severe.' Should it rain, but not blow, 'the last-named season will, on the contrary, prove a mild one.' Should it be a fine day, 'the ensuing year will be dry.' Should there previously have been rhime and frost, 'it will freeze after the first of the following May,' &c., &c.

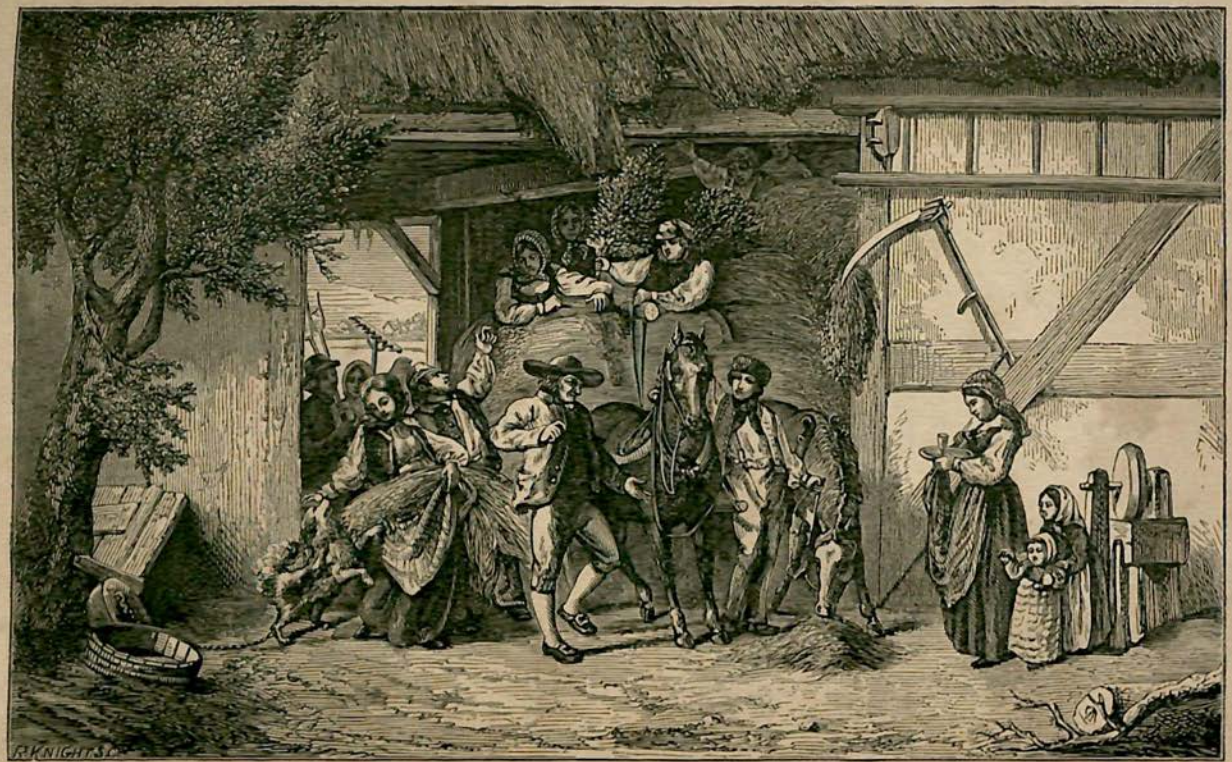
Prognostics as to the weather and the crops, &c., are also drawn from other sources. If, for example, one takes up an acorn that has fallen from the tree, and that a fly be found within it, 'the harvest will be only an average one;' if a worm, 'a good one is to be expected;' if nothing, 'an epidemic is at hand;' if it looks ripe, but is nevertheless empty, 'there will be a moderate snow-fall before Christmas, and severe frosts afterwards;' if well formed outwardly and full of kernel, 'the next summer will be a fine one, and grain of all kinds abundant;' if wet and damp within, 'one must be prepared for a mild winter and a wet

summer,' but if the shell and kernel be shrivelled, 'the latter will prove a hot one.'

'*Slotter öl,*' answering to our 'Harvest home,' is in several provinces of Sweden a great 'people's festival.'

'In Scania, and elsewhere,' says a Swedish writer, 'it has been the custom, from time immemorial, for the peasantry on the occasion to devote a day to pleasure and festivity. To them it is one of the happiest in the year. Their joy is loud and general. All are animated by the gratification which is the reward of every honest man on the successful completion of his labours. The festival takes place when the fields are shorn of their treasures and the grain safely housed. The peasants, as with those in a higher position in life, express their delight in the pleasures of the table. A well-furnished one has always been with us a needful adjunct to social comfort and pleasure. By eating and drinking we praise the care of Providence; we express our loyalty as subjects, our gratitude towards our benefactors, and our sympathy with the important occurrences of the day. By it we honour our contemporary celebrities, and show our affection towards our friends; and our gratitude, our respect, our love, and our delight, are not unfrequently measured by the quantity and quality of the viands and liquors set before us. We must not, therefore, blame our more humble friends when, after their labours are ended, they cheer their hearts with a merry meeting.

'The guests on these occasions are numerous, because relations, friends, and neighbours have all aided in gathering the corn into the garner; and now, by the invitation of the host, come to discuss the contents of his larder. And



p. 284.

HARVEST HOME.

we can assure our readers that this is most effectually accomplished. The repast lasts a long time, during which Swedish nectar—potato brandy—is forthcoming in abundance; and the dance that succeeds, which is kept up until a late hour, concludes the festivities.'

'Lucie day,' which falls on the 13th of December, or eleven days before Christmas, is a 'people's festival' in Sweden.

Its origin is somewhat doubtful. Some say that as the ancient Scandinavians considered it the shortest day in the year, they celebrated it as such. 'Lucie night,' according to the peasants, 'is so long that the ox, from hunger, bites the crib three several times.' '"Lucie night"' is mortal long,' said the cow, when dumb animals had the gift of speech. 'It's as good as two,' replied the ram. 'That's true,' put in the goat; 'it's a pity it exists.' Others, that the festival is ingrafted on an old heathen one in honour of the goddess Lucinda, who presided over the birth of children, and whom women in labour therefore invoked.

There are those, however, who contend that this festival was instituted in remembrance of the virtues of a beautiful virgin named Lucia, who in the early part of the fourth century lived in the town of Syracuse, and respecting whom we have the following legend:—

'Engaged to be married, she in secret gave the dower bestowed by her mother amongst the most impoverished of those who acknowledged the truths of Christianity, to which beneficent act she was induced from having witnessed the courage displayed at his execution by one of the martyrs. Her lover, being made acquainted with her

attachment to the new religion, informed against her; and when the judges could not prevail on her to sacrifice to idols as aforetime, they ordered her to be sent to a brothel. When, however, they were about to take her to this den of infamy, she was found to be immovably fixed to the spot. She was, therefore, disrobed, and a fire of oil and pitch made around her; but even when within the burning circle, she stood unmoved and unhurt. Seeing this, an executioner, armed with a sword, plunged the weapon into her throat, of which wound she forthwith expired.'

But whatever the origin of the festival in question, certain it is that in Catholic times it was celebrated with much pomp and solemnity; and even at the present day, especially in the more southern parts of Sweden, many of the customs of their forefathers are still kept up.

At three or four o'clock in the morning of 'Lucie day,' for example, the sleeper is aroused from his slumbers by the pleasing visit of a maiden clad in white, with a tiara, so to say, of lighted tapers on her head, entering the apartment. Some imagine this singular custom is to betoken the 'Martyr's glory,' or the flames that encircled the head of the virgin Lucia when being put to death. Others, that it originated with the old Northmen, who, looking on this as the shortest day in the year, considered fire and light as specially requisite; whilst there are those again who suppose it may be commemorative of the goddess Lucinda assisting children to the light of day.

The maiden bears in her hand a salver, whereon are placed coffee, brandy, cakes, &c., which must be partaken of in bed. One then rises, and the family and guests sit down to a plenteous repast, called '*Otte*,' that is, the early

meal, during which the glass circulates freely, and merriment is the order of the day.

Afterwards people are accustomed to both fish and shoot by the aid of a torch composed of slips of dry and resinous wood; but why or wherefore they should thus amuse themselves on this particular morning I am somewhat at a loss to understand.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAW.

LITIGATION.—THE LAWS.—CONSTITUTION OF COURTS.—DEFECTS IN THE LAW.—ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.—JUDGES NOT IMMACULATE.—CRIMINAL LAW.—CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS.—BREAD AND WATER.—FLOGGING.—MANNER OF EXECUTION.—EXPOSURE OF BODIES.

THE peasants resort in crowds to the '*Ting*,' or court of justice, which, in the rural districts, is held but seldom, partly on business,—for litigation being cheap in Sweden there is a good deal of it,—and partly to meet their friends and hear the news of the day. There are no regular advocates, as an authorized class; and the whole of the Swedish laws being codified and plain, the peasants, for the most part, are therefore their own lawyers; otherwise they employ certain individuals, generally of their own order, who are learned in the law, to act on their behalf.

In the towns, both in civil and criminal cases, the '*Rŭd Män*,' that is, common-councilmen, or assessors, and in the rural districts 12 peasants, constitute a sort of jury; but unless these men be *unanimously* opposed to the opinion of the judge—a circumstance of very rare occurrence—they have not the power of passing a verdict.

That rests altogether with the latter. Speaking generally, therefore, these men rather act as counsellors to the judge than as jurors. A jury, in the English sense of the word, indeed, is only empannelled in Sweden in political cases, or in those for written libel.

Lawsuits are mostly carried on in writing and by protocols, and appeals can be carried through three or four different courts. Oftentimes, therefore, they are tedious beyond measure; and should the parties be litigiously inclined, may be spun out for years and years. I myself, indeed, once had a comparatively trivial case, that in an English court of justice would have been disposed of in half an hour, that through chicanery, the keeping back of important witnesses, and probable corruption in more quarters than one, drew its slow length along for upwards of seven years!

A material reason why legal proceedings are so slow in Sweden is, that when a person is summoned to appear in court, whether for a civil or minor criminal offence, he may, by the payment of a most trivial pecuniary fine, put off the evil day for two or three assizes. This in the towns, where the court usually meets weekly or fortnightly, is of no great consequence; but in the rural districts, where the 'Ting' is only held two or three times in a year, or it may be only once, as in my time was the case in parts of Dalecarlia, it becomes a very serious matter.

One great blot, to my way of thinking, in Swedish jurisprudence is that, let a man's character be as bad as it well can be—unless he has been previously branded by the law for crime—his evidence, on oath, in a court of justice, is of equal value as that of the parson of the parish. A

second, that when a man is accused of a crime, instead of being looked on as innocent until, as with us, he is proved guilty, he is bullied, brow-beaten, and cross-questioned by the judge, as in France and some other countries, to extort from him, if possible, a confession of his guilt,—a proceeding one would little expect to find in a country calling itself free. A third, that though the aggrieved party is allowed to tell his own story, it is not on oath, and his evidence, therefore, unless corroborated by witnesses, goes for nothing. A fourth, that two witnesses are needful to prove a charge. It is true that in cases of a minor criminal nature one witness is sufficient, provided that the accused will not undertake to deny the charge on his oath; no great strain, perhaps, on the conscience of a man who may already have committed a serious offence.

Another objection as regards the local courts is, that one often sees a young fellow, apparently hardly out of his teens, presiding in the place of the judge of the district; for though he may be clever enough in his way, still it strikes me that, from the want of the needful experience, he can hardly be capable of deciding the weighty questions that must at times necessarily come before him.

The salaries that the judges, of the local courts at least, receive from the crown, are comparatively very trivial; their incomes, which are handsome, being chiefly derivable from the 'Protocols' relating to the proceedings of the court over which they preside, of which they themselves or their deputies have the concoction. The more litigation, therefore, the more money flows into their coffers, which, to my notion, is not a very desirable state of things.

The Swedish laws may not be perfection, but I believe

it is generally allowed that, as a whole, they are good and equitable, and suitable to the country.

Those relating to the registry of land ownership and mortgages are said to be particularly simple and efficacious.

But it is to be feared the laws are not at all times equitably administered; and that, as was the case with ourselves less than 100 years ago, and, according to report, in Russia at present, there is a good deal of corruption in Swedish courts of justice, and that the heaviest purse too often carries the day. This observation more particularly applies to the lower courts. They used to tell the story of a discarded judge, living not very far from where I once pitched my tent, who was accustomed to stand with one hand before and the other behind him, and receive bribes from both parties; and when thus placed in a sort of 'fix,' to 'toss up' whether his verdict should be for the plaintiff or defendant. I myself, indeed, have heard men of high standing, who held heavy stakes in Sweden, and who doubtlessly spoke not without experience, say, 'there is not a man in the country connected with the several courts of judicature, however high his rank, that has not his price.'

The criminal laws in Sweden lean to the side of mercy. No man, for example, can be convicted of a serious crime unless upon the evidence of two witnesses; and if it be of a capital nature, and that he be condemned to death, even then he cannot be executed until such time as he has made confession of his guilt. It is a curious fact, however, that though, from the fear of dissolution, he may for awhile assert his innocence, yet in the long run, what with the

exhortations of the clergyman, under whose special charge the convict is placed after condemnation, coupled with the weariness of a life passed in a dark and solitary cell, he in the end very rarely fails to acknowledge the justice of his sentence.

When the penalty of death is commuted, imprisonment in a fortress for life is the usual substitute; but should the conduct of the culprit be good during his confinement, and that his crime has not been of a very deep die, he is freequently pardoned by the king, at the end of ten or fifteen years.

In addition to imprisonment for life, however, the malefactor is often sentenced to subsist previously on bread and water for a certain number of days, and as no *salt* is allowed to be introduced into the bread, this, when taken into the stomach, *ferments*, and thus acts—in degree at least—as poison, and not very unfrequently, I am told, brings the unhappy man to an untimely end. This punishment, if extended to 28 days, the term limited by law, is therefore justly deemed nearly equivalent to the halter or the block.

Previous to the year 1855 flogging was often supplemented to imprisonment; not, however, with the cat-o'-nine-tails, as with us, but with the '*Spo*,' that is, hazel or willow switches, of some three feet in length, and at the butt end of about the thickness of one's little finger. Two of these switches were applied at the same time to the naked back and shoulders of the misdoer, and after that the executioner had administered three blows, he exchanged them for fresh ones, of which a large bundle was always lying at hand. '40 *par spo*' (that is, 120 blows,

each pair of switches being used, as said, three several times), were the greatest number the law permitted, and the full infliction of this punishment, as with that of 'bread and water,' was by many looked on as almost as bad as death itself.

Once when on a journey I came to a post station when the infliction in question, and that to its fullest extent, was being carried out. The culprit, who was bared to the waist, was tied by his hands to a high and stout post in suchwise that his toes alone touched the ground, so that it was utterly impossible for him even to flinch from the blows that were showered on him, and that apparently with good-will, by the executioner, over whom stood the *Lansman*, or authority of the district, with a drawn sword in his hand, to see that the man properly performed his duty. The culprit, of course, suffered terribly, though not to the extent I had anticipated; and almost immediately after the painful scene was over I, by permission of his gaoler, had an interview with him, and, so far as money was concerned, did my best to console him for his sufferings.

When women were condemned to be flogged, '*Ris*,' or the ordinary birch rod, was used instead of the switches spoken of; and the number of blows inflicted was usually one-third or one-fourth less than on men; but corporal punishment, whether with the 'Spo' or 'Ris,' is now altogether done away with in Sweden.

At the present day, I believe, the extreme penalty of the law is in all cases carried out by decapitation. Not many years ago, however, hanging was resorted to in special cases, such as the forging of state documents, and

arson. This latter mode of execution is looked on with great horror by the Swedes; but whether this be owing to the sufferings of the culprit being more prolonged,—for instead of the man falling from a 'drop,' as with us, he was used to be slowly drawn up from the ground,—or that a greater degree of disgrace was attached to it, I am in ignorance.

Capital punishments are now, however, rare; and perhaps in Sweden and Norway together not more than five or six individuals are decapitated annually. Formerly, as stated and depicted in 'Field Sports of the North of Europe,' the head, body, and hands of the malefactor were nailed to the top of separate posts of some height. But this custom is now, I believe, wholly done away with, and the ghastly spectacle no longer meets the eye of the traveller.

CHAPTER XXI.

SCHOOLS.

EDUCATION COMPULSORY.—PEOPLE'S SCHOOLS, PREPARATORY, STATIONARY, AND MOVABLE.— ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, UPPER AND LOWER.—PRIVATE SCHOOLS.—GYMNASTICS.—THE UNIVERSITIES.—FEMALE EDUCATION.—SEMINARIUM.—PRIVATE GIRLS' SCHOOLS.—CLERICAL INSTRUCTION.—THE HOUSE EXAMINATION.

As regards learning, the Swedish peasantry are certainly not behind our own, there being few of them that cannot both read and write, though it may be somewhat imperfectly; and that they should be ahead of us in these respects is little to be wondered at, because education in Sweden—and the like is also the case in Norway and Denmark—is not only *compulsory*, but, in the event of the parents being too poor to send their children to school, altogether *gratuitous*.

Supposing the law to be carried out to the letter, the present generation of the peasant class ought to be exceedingly well educated, for by the rules relating to schools, published in 1842, it was ordained, 'that in every parish, whether in town or country, throughout the kingdom, there should be two classes of '*Folk skolor*,' or 'People's

schools;' and in such parishes as are widely spread, and the population scanty, a third class; which are designated as follows:—

Firstly, the '*Smă skolor*,' or preparatory school, generally under the superintendence of a matron, I believe, where children of from five to eight years of age receive their first lessons in reading and writing, as also some insight into arithmetic. These 'Dame schools,' if I may so term them, are generally maintained by the parish; but should the latter be too poor to defray the expense, the government lends its aid.

Secondly, the '*Fasta skolor*,' or stationary schools. These are conducted by properly qualified masters, and the children attending them are commonly from 8 to 15 years of age. In the rural districts both boys and girls attend indiscriminately; but in the towns the sexes are usually educated separately. Where the scholars are numerous, the Lancastrian system is generally adopted. These schools are maintained by a rate levied on the inhabitants of the parish, on the same principle as the poor rate. By law, the *minimum* amount of knowledge the child must possess before being permitted to leave school is reading, writing, and the first rules of arithmetic, as also an acquaintance with the catechism, Bible history, and choral singing. Many, of course, leave school before they are 15, at which age it is usual to admit them to the sacrament; but should they remain in the school until then, and in the while have been regular in their attendance, they should, in addition to the acquirements named, have some knowledge of geometry, geography, the history

of Sweden, &c. In rural districts, a few years ago, they were instructed in gardening.

Thirdly, the '*Flytbara skolor*,' or movable schools, which, as said, exist only in the wilder and less populated parts of the country. These are instituted for the convenience of children living at considerable distances from the 'stationary schools' just spoken of, to attend which, with anything like regularity at least, would be difficult, if not impossible. The parish is therefore divided into districts, each of which the schoolmaster visits in rotation, and remains there for weeks or months, as the case may be. Notwithstanding these movable schools, however, it is shown, by statistical reports, that no less than 20,000 children have to go from three to four English miles, and 70,000 children two English miles, to their school. Early in the morning one often sees them, with a satchel containing their books and provisions for the day, trudging to school; or in the evening, when they are returning from thence.

For the superintendence of popular education a committee, or board, is chosen in every parish, and the rector of the parish is chairman. Besides this, a yearly inspection of all the schools is made by persons chosen by government, who give in yearly reports of the schools in their districts; and unless the parents of the child can satisfactorily prove to the parson of the parish that it is being properly educated at home or elsewhere, its attendance at one or other of them is, as said, compulsory. Should the parents be so poor as to be incapable of supplying it with the needful clothes and provisions to enable it to attend

school, the parish must bear the expense. And should it so happen that the education of the child which is taught at home be not sufficiently attended to, or that its parents neglect sending it to school, the authorities have power to take it from them, and intrust it to the care of some one else, they, the parents, being answerable for the cost thereby incurred.

To give the reader a better idea of the benefits arising from the several institutions mentioned, I subjoin a paragraph from a Swedish newspaper of the 22nd of May, 1869.

'According to the report of the inspector of schools in the town of Gottenburg (numbering some 50,000 inhabitants), there were, at the end of 1868, inscribed in the "people's schools" 4399 children, who were instructed by 106 teachers—male and female; add to these the 224 children and six teachers of the Willerska school, the number of children educated at the Gottenburg "people's schools" is 4632, and that of their teachers 112.'

For the education of the children of the lower classes, as shown, ample provision is thus made by the government; and the like is the case as regards those of the better classes by means of the so-called '*Elementarläro-werk*,' or 'elementary schools,' which, however, are open to the poor as well as to the rich. Of these there is one in every town in Sweden, and more than one, I believe, in Stockholm, Gottenburg, and other considerable places. They are divided into two classes, namely:—

Firstly, the '*Högre Elementarlärowerk*,' or upper ele-

mentary schools, of which there are 31 in all,—that is, one in each of the diocesan towns, and in such other towns as are of considerable magnitude. The number of scholars in each school is from 200 to 500; and of teachers—of whom a portion, as elsewhere said, are in holy orders—from 15 to 30.

The pupils are divided into seven, or more properly into ten, classes; because Nos. 5 to 7 classes are each in two sections; and it is the duty of the *rector*, or head master of the school, annually to publish a programme, showing what in every class has been taught during the past year, and the progress made. That given out by the rector of Skara High School in 1868, from which the following extract is taken, shows the knowledge the pupils in two of the classes had in the while acquired.

CLASS VII.

Latin: 2 books of Livy, 2 books of Virgil's Æneid, 2 books of the Odes of Horace.

Greek: Plato's Kriton; 1 book of Herodotus; 3 books of Homer's Iliad.

Mathematics: Plane Trigonometry, Sterometry.

Physics: Animal Magnetism and Electricity.

CLASS V.

Latin: De Regibus:—Livy of Epaminondas, Agesilaus, Eumenes, Phocion, Timoleon; 2 books of Cæsar's Bellum Gallicum; a few pages of Ovid's Metamorphoses.

Greek: Six chapters of Xenophon's Anabasis.

Mathematics: Euclid, 4th book. The boys who do not read *Greek*, or the so-called 'realist,' have moreover read the sixth book. The first degree in Algebra.

Physics: 500 plants and 60 grasses; amphibious animals and fishes. Mammalia and birds having been already studied in the fourth class.

In this programme is also set forth how much the boys

have read in the other sciences; but I omit it, partly because it would convey little information to the reader unacquainted with the Swedish school-books, and partly because what is stated above will give a pretty good general idea of the degree of knowledge imparted at these schools, from which, with the exception of three, the pupils may proceed direct to the Universities of Upsala and Lund.

Secondly, the '*Lagre Elementarlärowerk*,' or lower elementary schools, of which there are 65 distributed throughout the country. The pupils, varying in number from a very few up to 200 or 300, are divided into two to five classes, with from three to six teachers. These classes and the subjects taught in them correspond with two to five lowest classes of the upper schools, and the account given above of the studies of the fifth class is therefore applicable also to the fifth class in the lower school.

Both classes of the elementary schools are almost altogether supported by the government, the scholars contributing but little towards the expense.

The stipend of the rector—the head master, as said, of the first class—is from £225 to £250 of our money, together with a suitable residence; that of the '*Lectoner*' (lecturer), from £110 to £225, and of the 'Teachers' from £60 to £180.

The salary of the rector of the second class of these schools is about £180, and free quarters, &c., in addition; and that of the 'Teachers' from £60 to £180.

Though these 'elementary schools' are chiefly in-

tended, I believe, for the upper and middle classes, they are open, as said, to the public, the only condition being that the youth has attained to the age of 10, and that he has acquired the common rudiments of education. And should the parents of the boy be too poor to incur the expense of his schooling, he, on the certificate of the clergyman of the parish to that effect, is taught gratuitously. The cost under any circumstances is, however, very trivial, not exceeding, probably, a pound of our money annually. As a consequence of the facility thus afforded, numbers of the well-to-do peasants and humbler class of tradespeople send their sons to these schools, where they are sure to receive a liberal and excellent education.

Independently of the schools named, there are in Stockholm, Norrköping, Gottenburg, and, I believe, one or two other towns, private educational establishments of a high character, which are conducted on the same principle as the 'elementary schools,' and where, with the exception of the Greek and Latin classics, the same amount of learning is acquired by the boys as at the latter. Some of these '*Real gymnascium*,' or practical schools, as they are called, also send their pupils of the higher classes to the Universities of Lund and Upsala, after a public examination, controlled by the government, by means of *Censores*.

At neither these private schools, nor at the public 'elementary schools,' it is to be observed, are the pupils ever boarded or lodged, as is the case with us in England in similar establishments—such a thing as a boarding-school for boys, in our sense of the word, is not indeed to

be found in Sweden. They always live with their parents or families, and only attend school at certain hours of the day. Every schoolboy must have *Mälsman*, or a guardian, who is either the boy's father or some one who represents him, as, for instance, an elder brother, relative, or personal friend. This guardian is responsible to the rector for the boy's good conduct and behaviour whilst out of school; and the rector, in his turn, is responsible to the 'Mälsman' for the manner in which he teaches and treats the boy. At the end of every week the rector must sign his name to a so-called '*Anmärknings-Bok*,' that is, a book containing the certificates and 'marks' the boy, during the week, has received at school, which book he is obligated to show his guardian.

Hence it will be seen that schoolboys in Sweden enjoy a great degree of liberty, and during play-hours one sees them amusing themselves in various ways in and about the town; but never marched like soldiers in ranks, and commauded by their teachers, as is commonly the case in England and some other countries.

As elsewhere said, the Swedish youth are not much addicted to manly sports and exercises; but as a set-off, gymnastics (*Calisthenics*), and that on a scientific principle, are more greatly practised at all the public schools, more especially during the inclement season, by which means the pupils get plenty of exercise. Within the past few years, moreover, the boys at these institutions have been initiated in all military exercises.

There are, as said, two universities in Sweden, a word

respecting which may not perhaps be altogether out of place.

That of Upsala is one of the oldest seats of learning in the north of Europe, having been founded in 1477, under the sanction of Pope Sixtus IV., by Sten Sture, the Protector of Sweden. But that of Lund was not formally inaugurated till January, 1668, in the reign of Charles XI.

The students at Upsala are usually 1200 to 1300 in number, and at Lund 400 to 500. The teachers at the former, upwards of 80, and at the latter, about 50. The studies are in each divided into four faculties, viz.: Theology, law, medicine, and philosophy; of which, in 1864, the first-named reckoned 186 students, the second 199, the third 140, and the fourth 1041—that is, in the two universities.

Both are governed by a chancellor and pro-chancellor, assisted by a consistorium of the professors.

The pro-chancellors are always the bishops of Upsala and Lund; but the chancellor is usually some person of high rank. Members of the Royal Family have at different times, indeed, filled the office.

Not only several princes of the reigning house, but also many persons of the peasant class, have been educated at Upsala, and more than one of them has since gained distinction by works of poetry and history.

The library at this University contains upwards of 150,000 volumes, and amongst these the famous Mœso-Gothic Bible, known under the name of Codex Argenteus. It has also a collection of coins, an anatomical theatre, an

observatory, a chemical laboratory, and a very extensive collection of natural objects. There is also a botanical garden.

The library at Lund is smaller, numbering only 100,000 volumes.

Both of the seats of learning in question (as with the elementary schools) are mainly supported by the government, where the poorer scholars (independently of board and lodging, which they must find themselves) are exempted from a greater outlay than some two pounds annually.

What with the 'people's schools,' the 'elementary schools,' and the universities, the education of boys in Sweden is extremely well cared for by the government; but girls are not so happily situated; for, with the exception of the 'people's schools,' which, as said, are chiefly intended for the lower classes, and where both sexes are admitted, there are no public establishments for the instruction of young females.

Of late years, however, the government have instituted three '*Seminaries*,' two in Stockholm, and the other in the diocesan town of Skara, for the gratuitous education of young females that have attained the age of 17, who in after-life purpose earning their bread by giving tuition in public schools or in private families. And, from the fruits of these admirable institutions, they would seem to have been a great success.

As will be seen by the annexed '*Betyg*,' or certificate, given to a young lady friend of mine, who is now going through a course of instruction (occupying three years) at

the Skara 'Seminary,' the pupils are there taught many useful branches of knowledge, viz. :—

Religion,
Swedish Grammar,
Writing,
Arithmetic,
Geography,
History,
Geometry,
Natural History,
Drawing,
Music and Singing,
Gymnastics,
Gardening,
Method of Teaching.

Of the two seminaries for young females in the capital, the instruction given in the one is similar, or nearly so, to that at Skara, as shown above; but in the other, it is of a somewhat superior description, the pupils being taught two or more of the living languages, and other branches of study are, moreover, carried further than in the last-named institution.

But though, with the exception of the 'people's schools,' and the 'Seminaries' just spoken of, there are not any public establishments for the education of girls in Sweden, there is no want of private institutions for that purpose. Such, indeed, are to be found in every town throughout the country, as also in many rural districts; and where, moreover, the pupils—should the parents so

desire—can be both boarded and lodged: for the most part, however, these private schools are attended chiefly by day scholars.

In their religious duties, as shown, the children of both poor and rich are properly instructed at the several schools named; and, prior to their taking the sacrament, which, as said, occurs when they have attained to about the age of 15, and immediately after confirmation, they are for weeks together in constant attendance on the clergyman of the parish; and for them to partake of the above-named rite of the Church is very needful even in a worldly point of view, or was so, at least, until within the past few years, when, according to the strict letter of the law, no one, unless he had 'communicated,' could either marry or hold office under the crown.

But the supervision of the clergyman over the youth of both sexes ceases not on their taking the sacrament; for, to say nothing of his occasionally visiting them at their own homes, he, or his curate, annually holds in every considerable hamlet of his parish, or district of the town, should he reside in one, a so-called '*Hus-Förhör*,' or house-examination, at which one member at least of every family is expected to be present, when he questions them, in turn, in regard to their biblical knowledge, &c., and gives them good counsel, &c.

The day in question is looked on with some anxiety by those who are not altogether at home in regard to religious matters. We are, indeed, told that some days prior to its arrival it used to be the custom, in parts of the country, for the mistress of the house to allow the servant

girls an extra candle, so that, after the day's work was over, they might rub up their memory as to the catechism, &c.

As may be supposed, very singular answers are at times given by both old and young to the questions propounded to them by the clergyman. We read, for instance, of a girl who was asked, 'What reward dost think thou deservest, for thy many sins committed here in life?' Her response to which was, 'Lord, help us! Nothing whatever; I have never asked anything for them.'

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SWEDISH CHURCH.

THE NATIONAL CHURCH.—THE CLERGY.—CHURCH REVENUES.—INCOMES OF THE CLERGY.—THE UNIVERSITIES.—CHOICE OF BISHOPS.—NATURE OF BENEFICES.—FREE LIVINGS.—COMPETITORY SERMONS.—STATUS AND DRESS OF THE SWEDISH CLERGY.—THE CHURCH DIET.—THE CHURCHES.—THE SERVICE.—NOTICES FROM THE PULPIT.—THE CUTTY-STOOL.—THE SACRAMENT.—SECTARIANS.—THE LÄSARE.—THE CHARTAUARNE.—INTOLERANCE.

THE peasantry are great church-goers, much more so, as regards the men, at least, than the so-called better classes. Some account of the Swedish Church and its government may not, therefore, be altogether out of place, the rather as these matters have been somewhat misrepresented in England.

The national religion of Sweden is Episcopalian, and in form of doctrine Lutheran. With the exception of some few Sectarians, of whom presently, the bulk of the nation are of that persuasion.

There is one archbishopric—that of Upsala; eleven bishoprics—those of Lund, Linköping, Westerås, Hernosand, Calmar, Wexio, Gottenburg, Skara, Strangnäs, Carlstad, and Wisby; eight deaneries; about one hundred and fifty rural deaneries, and some twelve hundred

rectories or incumbences. Altogether the clergy may be estimated at about four thousand; but in this number is included that portion of the teachers of the public schools who are in holy orders, of whom there may probably be from three to four hundred.

For the management of affairs ecclesiastical there are thirteen consistories, that is, one for each of the twelve dioceses, and the remaining one in Stockholm, which is presided over by the archbishop when in the capital, but otherwise by the *Pastor Primarus*. Every question that cannot be decided on by these local courts is referred to the king and the minister for ecclesiastical affairs, whose judgment is final.

The clergy derive their incomes partly from the crown, but principally from tithes.

Prior to the Reformation, which occurred during the reign of Gustavus Vasa, in the 16th century, the tithes in Sweden were divided into three equal parts, one of which belonged to the rectories, another to the church, for building purposes and the like, and the remaining third to the bishops, the schools, and the hospitals. But this monarch, though he left the portion belonging to the rectories for the most part intact, disposed of the other two parts according to his good pleasure; appropriated them, in short, to his own use and that of the crown.

The tithes fall equally on new and old lands, but are seldom levied on the former. They are sometimes paid in kind, but in most instances — as is now the case in England—a composition, sanctioned by law, takes place between the pastor and his flock. The ecclesiastical revenues from church lands are comparatively very small.

Neither the bishops, nor the higher order of the clergy, are in possession of such overgrown incomes as is the case with us at home; but they are amply sufficient to enable them to support a highly respectable position in society. That of the Archbishop of Upsala may be estimated at about £1200 a year; of three of the bishops, those of Lund, Linköping, and Westerås, at £1000, and of the remaining eight, at from £500 to £600; of the eight deans, about £350; of the one hundred and fifty rural deans, less, on the average, than £300; and of the twelve hundred rectories (including, be it observed, the produce of their glebe lands), from £100 to £300. Very few, indeed, exceed the latter sum; and out of this very moderate provision they have to pay, in part, their curates, &c. In the aggregate, the Church revenues of Sweden are supposed to amount to less than 6,000,000 rix dollars, *Rix mynt*, or some £300,000 of our money.

The lower orders of the clergy are, however, rather badly off, though somewhat better of late years than was the case at no very distant period. One portion of their small incomes is derived from the incumbents, or other superiors in the church; but another, called '*Offer*,' in the shape of direct contribution from the parishioners to themselves in person in the church itself.

This takes place towards the end of the service, and whilst a psalm is being sung by the congregation; when those who purpose contributing proceed slowly, and in single file, up to the altar, where each one deposits his gift in a general heap, the clergyman, who stands beside the altar, and is attired in full canonicals, making him or her, as the case may be, a low obeisance! This most unseemly

—and as regards the poor parson himself, most demeaning —custom is chiefly confined, I believe, to the provinces bordering on the western coast of Sweden, which were formerly under the rule of Denmark. It originated, we are told, in Catholic times, 'when the priests made the people believe that thus making gifts to the church and to themselves, was a sure means of obtaining reconciliation with Heaven!'

Youths intended for the Church complete their education at the Universities of Lund and Upsala. To qualify for holy orders, to which they are not admitted until they have attained their twenty-third year, they must go through not only the usual university examination in theoretical and practical theology, but also a sacerdotal one before the local ecclesiastical court. This usually requires from two to three years, and in the mean while their expenses, at the most moderate calculation, amount to from £20 to £30 annually. Then, again, before they can become '*Kyrkoherdar*,' rectors or incumbents, and have the charge of parishes, they must go through a special and more searching examination on pastoral matters; and (with a few exceptional cases) must then be at least thirty years old.

The manner of electing the bishops differs somewhat from our English custom. The incumbents and the curates vote. The consistory, or ecclesiastical board, sets forth to the king's choice the three who have received the most votes, and his Majesty nominates which of these he pleases.

Some of the benefices are in the gift of private individuals (which right is called *Jus Patronatus*), whose

ancestors erected and endowed the churches, and they themselves are bound to keep in repair. Others are altogether at the disposal of the parishioners. But the majority are either in the gift of the king or of the consistory.

When one of the free livings becomes vacant, the candidates (who must belong to the diocese) send in their names and qualifications to the consistory. Three of the number are selected by the court, and on separate Sundays exhibit their powers of oratory to the congregation lacking a pastor; and as something like unto canvassing, if not worse, is carried on by their friends, these '*Prof-Predikningar,*' or competitory sermons, as they are called, excite no little stir and commotion in the parish. Each parishioner has votes in accordance with his territorial possessions; and it may therefore be readily conceived that wealth, or rather acres, have a preponderating influence on the election.

The vacant benefices in the king's gift follow the same rule as the free livings, excepting that the parishioners have the privilege of nominating a fourth candidate (always provided that his clerical qualifications fully equal those of the least qualified of his competitors), so that they have four persons from whom to choose. Still, as his Majesty has the legal right to nominate whom he pleases, provided the qualifications of the individual be unexceptional, the election, in point of fact, is a mere form and fiction.

As is the case in Scotland, the Swedish clergy usually belong to the middle classes; or, rather, are the sons of wealthy peasants, very few scions of noble, or even opulent, families being found in their ranks. They are generally

most respectable and well meaning, and not a few are distinguished by great talent; but, taken as a body, they are not noted for great learning, refinement of mind, or exalted views. That they are duly attentive to the religious instruction of their flocks, however, I myself can in part testify to; and the fact is much to their credit, namely, that I never recollect entering the meanest hovel in the wilds of the forest, that I did not find it supplied with a Bible and other religious books.*

Still the Swedish parson, as with parsons all over the world, has usually not only the lamb-like look becoming his calling, but a very portly and sleek appearance, which is little surprising, as by all accounts he is specially fond of the 'flesh-pots.' Hence a certain part of the goose, which it is needless to particularize, is by the peasants called the parson's nose, but meaning his 'tit-bit.' I here speak of the higher order of the clergy; for the lower, owing to their most scanty incomes, too often put one in mind of 'Pharaoh's lean kine.'

In the rural districts, at least, the Swedish parson, when preaching, almost always holds in his hand, by the corner, an outspread white kerchief, or what ought to be such, which he either twirls about his fingers, or waves to and fro, as an orator his arms. Without it, indeed, I know not how the worthy man would get on; for when

* That such is the case is probably in great degree owing to the exertions of the Bible societies, of which the Royal Swedish Society, established in 1815, had up to the end of 1867 distributed 204,896 Bibles and 603,130 Testaments, in all 808,026 volumes. Though this society scarcely numbers 300 members, its gross income in 1867 amounted to some £2000, of which about £700 was derived from the sale of books, although the price is merely nominal. Its capital invested in books and in buildings is estimated at £6000, or thereabouts.

he comes to a hitch in his sermon he, by flourishing the kerchief about during the pause, has time to recover the thread of his discourse. This 'fancy kerchief'—as from its never being brought into real use it may with propriety be termed—serves him, moreover, as a blind when ducking his head that he may the more readily obtain access to the 'working kerchief' in his pocket, generally a somewhat fusty-looking affair, owing to the clergy being great snuff-takers.

The Swedish clergy at all times and seasons appear in black, wearing the Lutheran frock-coat with plaited breast and a single row of buttons. But no service is performed by them without adding the white bands, or lappets, and a narrow black cloak. Though in general their dress is simple and plain, and such as becomes their cloth, yet 'on church high days a white surplice is worn, with the chasuble, or velvet and silver-mounted stole, over it.'

In the olden times, however, it would seem that the Swedish clergy, as with some of our own at the present day, indulged in peculiarities of attire that were offensive to people generally; for by an ordinance promulgated in 1664, it was enacted, amongst other things, 'that their dress should be of a grave and sober character, and that in the cutting out of their clothes foreign forms were not to be copied; as also that the dress of the inferior clergy should differ from that of the higher, the latter being permitted to wear velvet, silk, and plush, from the use of which the former were debarred. One and all, however, were prohibited from wearing long hair, high pointed hats, and large stuffed caps, and, excepting in cases of real necessity, the use of perukes, or skull caps. It was further

ordained that the wives of the clergy should clothe themselves after the old, good, sober, and modest custom ; and that such of them as from childhood had worn Swedish dresses, and were still in the same '*Stand*,' or rank in life, were not to put on those of foreign make. They, the women, were likewise admonished—counsel that it is to be feared went to the winds—'to be careful of giving way to curiosity, which tends to bring the sex into disrepute.'

The clergy, until a very recent period, formed, as elsewhere said, one of the four estates of the Swedish Parliament; but now they only meet every fifth year at a '*Kyrkomöte*,' or Church diet, consisting of the bishops and deputies from the provincial clergy, together with 30 members elected by the laity of the several dioceses to consult on ecclesiastical and Church government matters.

The churches, in the rural districts of Sweden at least, are usually of wood, and have often a very primitive look. Those of modern construction, however, are usually built of stone or brick, and are handsome and correct in appearance. A few have territorial property attached to them ; but when this is not the case, the needful funds to keep them in repair are raised by rates, or by voluntary contribution.

Though on certain anniversaries and festivals of the Church there may be some little difference, yet on ordinary occasions the morning service is as follows.

In the commencement a short psalm is sung, in which the congregation almost universally join, the clergyman meanwhile taking his place at the altar with his back to the people, but at the conclusion of the psalm he turns to-

wards them, and, whilst standing up, reads, in a very solemn and emphatic manner, this beautiful and impressive Doxology, or combination rather of praise and prayer.

'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Heaven and earth are full of Thy majesty! We praise Thee and we honour Thee! We worship Thee! We thank Thee for Thy wondrous works, O Lord God, King of Heaven, Lord Father Almighty! O Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten Son of the Most High! O Holy Spirit, Spirit of peace, of truth, and of mercy! All Thy works praise Thee, everlasting Lord! Everlasting is Thy power, even as Thou art! Thy goodness is unchangeable! Look, everlasting Father, with favour on this people gathered together in Thy sanctuary to worship Thee, to render thanks for Thy mercies, and to implore Thy grace for the welfare of their souls and bodies. Enlighten our minds in Thy knowledge, and teach our hearts to bring Thee the sacrifice of a true obedience. Weighed down by the burden of our sins, we fall down before Thee in the dust, and pray for mercy and forgiveness, O God, our Saviour. Loving, kind, and gracious art Thou, great in mercy and compassion. Hear the united prayer which here rises to Thy throne.'

At the termination of the Doxology the clergyman, as well as the congregation, kneel, and he then repeats the Confession.

'I, poor miserable sinner, who, born in sin, have all the days of my life in manifold ways trespassed against Thee, do confess with my whole heart before Thee, O holy and righteous God, merciful Father, that I have not loved Thee above all things, nor my neighbour as myself.

Against Thee, and against Thy holy law, have I sinned in thought, word, and deed; and know that I therefore deserve eternal damnation, if Thou shouldest judge me as Thy justice demands, and my sins have merited. But Thou, O beloved Heavenly Father, hast promised that Thou wilt receive in Thy arms with tenderness and mercy all repentant sinners who turn unto Thee, and with a lively faith fly to Thy fatherly pity; and through the merits of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Thou wilt overlook the trespasses they have committed against Thee, and wilt no more reckon against them their sins. Wherefore I, miserable sinner, do put my trust, and pray Thee with much comfort, that, according to Thy promise, Thou wouldest be forgiving and gracious, and pardon me all my sins, to the praise and honour of Thy holy name.

'May the Almighty everlasting God, out of His great unfathomable mercy, and through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, forgive us all our sins, and give us grace to amend our lives, and to enter with Him into life eternal.'

At the conclusion of this very sublime Confession, a psalm is sung by the congregation, then the Epistle, and Apostolic Creed, so styled, which is precisely similar to our own, are read. Leaving the altar, the clergyman now ascends the pulpit, in which while the verse of another psalm is sung.

This concluded, he (the clergyman) gives out the text, taken from the Gospel appointed for the day, from which he purposes to preach, and shortly expatiates on its subject matter. He then audibly repeats our Lord's Prayer, so far at least as 'hallowed be Thy name,' the remainder of it both he himself and the congregation only breathing, so to

say, to themselves. The Gospel follows, the people standing, and then comes the sermon, a somewhat lengthy affair, as in most instances it lasts for an hour or more. At its termination the clergyman offers up prayers for the powers that be, the sick, &c., and notifies the births and deaths that have occurred in the parish within the past week, and the marriages about to take place.

In publishing the banns of marriage, it should be remarked, the happy man, if of the peasant class at least, is usually described as honest and good, and the maiden as amiable and virtuous; but in these very flourishing designations it has struck me that very strange mistakes are often made.

A short prayer follows; when descending from the pulpit, in which while a psalm is sung by the congregation, the clergyman resumes his place at the altar, from whence he implores a blessing of the Almighty on the congregation; and afterwards the last verse of some psalm is sung, which terminates the service.

Within a very short period it was customary for the clergyman himself, prior to leaving the pulpit, to read aloud not only all governmental and parochial notices, but others of an altogether private nature, such as when and where an auction was to take place, &c., and that often in so very hurried a manner as to be hardly consistent with decency. But this custom, which always struck me as a somewhat indecorous one in a place of worship, is now so far done away with, that the advertisements in question are not read by the clergyman until the service is entirely over, and the congregation so far dispersed that only those individuals remain in the church who are in expectation of hearing matter interesting to themselves,—a no-

tice from the pulpit, as elsewhere said, being a legal one.

Within the past few years, moreover, it was customary for misdoers to do penance in the sacred edifice, not exactly as a punishment, I believe, but as a needful step to their re-admission into the bosom of the Church, from which, for their misdeeds, they had been expelled. In the towns where, from the want of jails in the rural districts, prisoners are at times rather numerous, it was not at all unusual of a Sunday morning to see one or other of them seated on the 'cutty-stool;' and as this was placed in the centre aisle, the man was consequently exposed to the gaze of the greater part of the congregation. At the conclusion of the service the clergyman went up to him, and held a suitable discourse on the heinousness of the crime he had committed; and upon the penitent publicly confessing his guilt—for unless this were done he was forthwith remanded to prison—gave to him absolution.

Though it might not be exactly as a punishment that criminals were sentenced thus to do penance in the church, still as the ordeal they then went through was regarded by the community at large as most degrading, the spectacle might possibly be the means of deterring them from again offending. To judge, however, by their usual callous look on these occasions, it always struck me that a cat-o'-nine-tails, well applied to their backs, would have had a far more beneficial effect than either the disgrace of their position or the exhortations of the clergyman.

Neither the ten commandments, nor any portion of either the Old or New Testament (with the exception of the lesson of the day), are ever read in the Swedish church; the Apostles' Creed but once during the service, and the

Athanasian Creed on no occasion whatever; the Litany only four times within the year, and that on the prayer-days, four of which are specially appointed annually for supplication and fasting. Of the 500 hymns contained in the Swedish prayer book, or psalm book, as it is called, only a very few are paraphrases of the Psalms of David, all the rest being original compositions,—many of them by the late Archbishop Wallin,—and which, as a whole, are considered by competent judges to be exceedingly beautiful. Several of the church melodies are by Luther. Chanting, or intoning, which is not enjoined by the Swedish law, is not very usual, and if adopted, it is only when the clergyman has a good voice. By law the people must stand up whilst the Doxology, the Apostles' Creed, the Epistle and the Lesson of the day are being read; but this regulation is not in all instances, I believe, very rigidly observed.

The sacraments of the Swedish Church are the same with those of the Church of England, and are administered in much the same form. As regards the Holy Communion in particular, the Swedes, with all other Lutherans, hold a doctrine different from ours. They believe that the elements, after consecration, contain the substance of the body and blood of Christ co-ordinately with the original substance of the bread and the wine,—a doctrine known to churchmen as 'Consubstantiation,' or 'Impanation.'

Speaking of the sacrament in question in rural districts, a Swedish writer observes:—

'One of the most beautiful rites of the Church is here solemnized,—the Lord's Supper is being administered at the Communion Table. Many a loving St John rests his head on the bosom of his Master, to receive from Him the

bread of life and cup of salvation. Round the foot of the altar kneel the believers in Christ, renewing the vows of their baptism. Here only is found equality. There is room for all. High and low, rich and poor, young and old; they are all in need of the same provision for the journey through life. The aged, the soldier, with silvery locks, though bent under the weight of years and sufferings, still directs his tottering steps towards the Cross of the Redeemer. The eye of the blind cannot discern the image of the Saviour, the simple but precious ornament of the altar; but the eye of faith sees the object of its faith and longings.'

Though the bulk of the nation, as was recently remarked, are of the Lutheran persuasion, there are Roman Catholics, Baptists, Mormons, Swedenborgians, and Jews in Sweden; but the members of these several sects are few in number.

There are also a good many '*Läsare*,' or 'Readers,' belonging chiefly to the peasant class, who, though not coming exactly under the designation of sectarians—for they are in communion, to a certain extent, with the Established Church and its doctrines and tenets—still object to what they consider a great want of vitality in the service, &c., and therefore meet for prayer and more fervent adoration of their Maker, either at one or other of their own homes, or at a so-called 'prayer-room,' of which, in the more remote parts of the country, they are said to possess several. They have no particular form of worship; but, as their name would denote, confine themselves chiefly to the reading and expounding of the Holy Scriptures; and, from what I myself have seen of them, I should say they

are a conscientious people, and certainly not in any way behind their countrymen generally as regards morals and good conduct.

On the west coast of Sweden, and it may be elsewhere, there is a second class of 'Läsare,' called '*Chartauarne,*' or followers of Chartau, a late eminent divine, who so far differ from those above-mentioned, that instead of entertaining, as they do, somewhat lukewarm feelings towards the national Church, are its zealous worshippers and stanch adherents. They are, moreover, said to be distinguished from their co-religionists by greater zeal and purity of life.

Formerly the 'Läsare' were much slandered and persecuted, and that at the instance of the clergy—always hard task-masters—and severe laws were enacted to put them down. As a somewhat natural consequence, 'there arose amongst them, towards the end of the past or beginning of the present century, a society of wild fanatics styling themselves "*Nya Läsare,*" or New Readers. The churches were abandoned; the services and writings of highly-talented and estimable clergymen were openly burned; proselytes were made with unflagging zeal; meetings were held in far-distant dwellings and desolate forests; and their hatred to the national Church and her teachers found a vent only in the most furious rant.'

The Swedes were formerly very intolerant in regard to religious matters. Until within the past few years, indeed, the Jews were not only confined to a residence in two or three of the principal towns of the kingdom (from Norway they were altogether excluded), but debarred from possessing landed property. These prohibitory laws are now, how-

ever, abrogated, and at the present day that ancient people, as also all other religious sects, are, I believe, placed on an equal footing with orthodox Lutherans.

Even up to 1864, when the enactments relating to religion and the desecration of the Sabbath were considerably modified, we read as follows in the Swedish Law Code :—

'Should any one apostatize from the true evangelical religion, and come to entertain erroneous opinions respecting religious matters, and he refuses to acknowledge his error, he shall be expelled the kingdom ; in which case he will not be entitled to any inheritance that may fall to him ; or to the rights of citizenship, unless he be pardoned by the king and return to the country.

'And if any one, whether native or foreigner, disseminate false doctrines, and after warning do not desist, he also shall be sent out of the kingdom.

'He who designedly and deliberately, whether by word of mouth or in writing, rails against and blasphemes God, and His holy Word and Sacrament, shall suffer death. Should the offence have been committed in haste and without premeditation, and that he expresses contrition for the same, his sentence shall be commuted to a pecuniary fine, and to his publicly imploring the forgiveness of the congregation. If the offence be repeated a second time he is to be fined double, and be imprisoned for 14 days on bread and water, &c., &c.

'Should any one show such a contempt for the public worship that he seldom goes to church on Sundays or holidays, he shall be warned in manner prescribed by the Church regulations, and be fined 3 rix dollars 16 banco.

For any person keeping his servant from church, in the way above stated, the law is the same.

'Any one committing a crime on a Sunday or holiday, between the hours of four in the morning and nine in the evening, shall be fined 3 rix dollars 16 banco, for breach of the Sabbath, and separately for the act itself.

'Any person pursuing any work or trade on these days, except it is done for his own exigencies or those of others, and which will not admit of delay, shall be fined 3 rix dollars 16 banco.

'Shops for general articles of merchandise are not to be opened on Sundays and holidays; but after divine service provisions and beer may be sold to those who stand in need of refreshment. Neither is it allowed to sell goods from on board of ships or other vessels on these days; and should any one offend in these matters he is to be fined for desecration of the Sabbath in the manner mentioned. The fine is the same should a person go on an excursion by land or water, whether in town or in the country, before the conclusion of the service. He who for the purpose gets ready a boat or a horse is to be fined 5 "dalar." Should any one be on a journey, he is to attend service at the church that lies nearest to the road.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ARMY AND NAVY.

THE BEWÄRING, OR ARMED DEFENCE. — THE VOLUNTEERS. — THE MILITIA.—EFFICIENT CHARACTER OF THE ARMY.—THE NAVY.—THE NAVY OF THE ISLANDS.—TRANSITION STATE OF THE SEA-GOING NAVY.

EVERY man of the peasant class, and of all other classes, indeed, in Sweden, is, to a certain extent, a soldier; for on attaining to his 21st year he is enrolled for five years in the '*Bewäring*,' literally 'armed defence.' The two first summers he has to undergo a fortnight's drill, and be instructed in his military duties by officers of the standing army, or rather of the '*Indelta*,' the regular militia. During these five years he is liable, on any emergency, to serve within the realm; and at their termination he remains for other fifteen years in the '*Land Storm*,' or *Le dernier resource*, which, as its name denotes, can only be called out in extreme need, and after the younger defenders of the country have been found insufficient.

Those who live on the coast, and are accustomed to anything resembling a seafaring life, are in much the same manner drafted into the naval service.*

* The number of the regular 'Bewäring' belonging to the five classes in question were, in 1863, 83,324 land, and 25,000 sea, together 108,324.

Until a recent period, those who were unwilling to be enrolled in the 'Bewäring' were permitted to find substitutes, which was of easy accomplishment, and at little expense; but as the law at present stands, though a youth may save himself the fortnight's drill for two successive summers by paying a fine to the government of 100 rix dollars, rixmynt, or some £6 of our money, it will not relieve him from active service in case of war. Such of the members, however, of the volunteer rifle corps, which are organized on nearly the same principle as with us, and whose numbers in Sweden now amount to about 20,000, as can produce certificates of proficiency in their drill, are exempted from that gone through by the *Bewäring*.

Certain of the peasantry and others are also enrolled in the regular militia of the country. This force is composed of either 25 or 26 regiments of infantry, and five of cavalry, amounting together to something above 30,000 men; and are officered by gentlemen, whether residing in the provinces to which they (the regiments) belong, or elsewhere in Sweden, all at the pleasure of the Crown.

During peaceable times this militia is only called out for five or six weeks every year for drill and exercise, but there are previous meetings for the recruits, which usually take place about the month of June. The men are, however, marshalled at their respective churches once every fortnight or thereabouts.

The whole of Sweden is divided into 'Hemmans,' signifying '*Homestead*,' or possibly the 'plough land,' which, for military purposes, took place during the reign of Charles II.; and these, again, are very generally divided

into small farms. At the time it was probably an equitable division of the land, as regarded the money value of the latter, but without reference to the area. The size of the 'Hemman,' as a consequence, varies very greatly in the several provinces. To give a better idea of this, I may mention that in that of Malmö, about the richest and best-cultivated in Sweden, the 'Hemman' contains the one-hundredth part of a square mile, whilst in that of Piteä, which is very scantily populated, and covered with forests (formerly nearly valueless but now of great worth), it contains one square mile and a quarter; that is, a 'Hemman' in the province of Piteä is one hundred and twenty-five times larger than one in the province of Malmö.

When speaking of the size of an estate in Sweden, it is customary to say that it consists of so many 'Hemmans,' not 'Tunlands,' or acres, as with us in England. But this description, as will be gathered from what is above stated, gives but little idea of the real area of the property.

Generally speaking, every two and a half 'Hemmans' furnish a man for the infantry militia; but for the cavalry militia only certain 'Hemmans,' to which, however, other 'Hemmans' are usually contributors.

The militia man, except when called out on service, receives no pay, but is provided by the 'Hemman,' or 'Hemmans,' to which he belongs, with a snug cottage and a little land, on which, if he be industrious, he may always obtain a comfortable livelihood. In the first instance, the man is furnished by his 'Hemman' with an outfit of clothes, and, if he be in the cavalry, with a horse and accoutrements, but subsequently he receives the needful supplies from the government.

Though these forces be called a militia, they are about equal, I take it, to any regular troops in the world. The soldiers are always men of good character, in the prime of life, and serve for a number of consecutive years, and as they have a stake in the country, would naturally do their duty when opposed to an enemy. The militia is a very fine body of men. Colonel H——, of our Guards, indeed, who saw much of several of the different regiments, said, when on a visit with me some years ago, 'That excepting they were not as well "set up" as his own men,'—which is little to be wondered at, from their being generally engaged in agricultural pursuits,—'they were fully equal to them in regard to stature and general appearance.'

The standing army in Sweden is very small, consisting of two regiments of foot-guards, one of cavalry of the guard, and three of artillery, together some 7000 to 8000 men.

Thus it will be seen that, though the regular army of Sweden be so few in number, the king, in the event of war, has, independently of the Norwegian army, upwards of 100,000 men at his immediate disposal, whether to serve at home or abroad, a force which, ably commanded and entrenched in the fastnesses of the Scandinavian forests, might bring to a 'stand-still' even the great Russian Bear.

The Swedish *Navy*, which has many glorious recollections to fall back on, formerly consisted, as stated in 'Field-sports of the North of Europe,' of 10 ships-of-the-line; 13 frigates; 19 brigs, cutters, &c.; 28 galleys; 10 bomb-ketches; 10 howitzers; 325 gunboats; 132 sundries. And its officers and men of—1 admiral; 2 vice-admirals; 4 rear-admirals; 24 commanders; 16 captains; 176 first

and second lieutenants; 16 chaplains; 21 surgeons; 8121 boatmen; and 14,824 seamen. Total 23,205.

In 1866, however, it was divided into two totally distinct and separate parts, viz., the navy proper, or sea-going portion of it; and that intended for the protection of the *Skärgärd*, the belt of islands that in many places gird the coast of Sweden, and hence its somewhat singular designation of '*Skärgärds artilleriet*,' or artillery of the islands.

As with our own and that of other European nations, the sea-going portion of the Swedish navy is just now in a state of transition. With few exceptions, indeed, all the wooden ships are either condemned or about to share that fate, or else are converted into other than warlike purposes. Under these circumstances it would be worse than idle were I to attempt describing the navy, as in less than a month, probably, such description would be found altogether incorrect. Suffice it, therefore, to say that at the present moment the serviceable 'active fleet' can hardly be said to consist of more than 4 iron-armoured monitors, each mounted with two heavy guns; one other smaller armed monitor, intended for exclusive use in the 'Skärgärd'; 1 wooden steam frigate; 2 wooden steam corvettes (besides one not yet ready); 4 other wooden corvettes (formerly frigates), but without steam; and 10 or 12 steam wooden gunboats, each constructed to carry two 72-pounders.

The staff of the sea-going navy at the present day, which has been very greatly reduced, consists of only 1 rear-admiral; 3 commodores; 5 commodore captains of the first class; 12 of the second; 20 captains; 28 lieutenants, and 21 sub-lieutenants.

The other division of the Swedish navy, that for the defence of the Islands, as yet consists mostly of the old 'Skärgärds flotilla,' that is, rowing vessels armed with large guns; but they are now building others propelled by steam and armoured; and its staff of 1 major-general; 2 colonels; 5 lieutenant-colonels; 9 majors; 22 captains; 23 lieutenants, and 15 sub-lieutenants. The boatmen, as those who man this fleet are called, are, I believe, about 3000 in number.

The organization, &c., &c., of this corps, if so I may venture to call it, differs widely (as may be inferred from the titles of more than one of its commanders) from that of the sea-going navy. Its officers, indeed, are not expected to possess more nautical knowledge than will enable them to navigate their craft within the 'Skärgärd,' and their uniform more resembles that of Hussars than seamen.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

MODERN RECREATIONS AND ANCIENT SPORTS.

SPINNING PARTIES.—THE SCANDAL TANKARD.—LUND HORSE FAIR.—BARBAROUS MANNER OF FIGHTING.—ANCIENT EXERCISES: VAULTING, CLIMBING, RUNNING, SWIMMING, WRESTLING.—PRACTICE IN THE USE OF ARMS.—SKATING.—HOCKEY.—THE SWORD GAME.—THE CHASE.—AN OLD NORSEMAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SON.—A CONTRAST.

AMONGST other customs of the Swedish peasantry, in parts of the country, is for the matrons to make up spinning-wheel parties amongst themselves; for finding it dullish work to spin all alone at home, they meet together at one or other of their own houses previously agreed on, where—each one with her spinning-wheel before her—they sit chatting until eventide. These agreeable meetings are kept up until 'spinning time' is over.

The young unmarried women have the like meetings as the matrons, but these take place in the cattle house,—which in Sweden, however, as we have seen, differs widely from our ideas of a building of that nature,—where they sit in a row with their spinning-wheels; and, what with telling stories, guessing riddles, &c., have no end of fun.

Agreeable as the meetings in question may be, they have their disadvantages; for as at such times women's

tongues are apt to go somewhat fast, what on the first recital was a mere rumour becomes, by repetition, and by the time it has run the rounds of the parish, a confirmed fact, or rather, perhaps, a gigantic fib!

In places, however, something like an antidote is found for this inconvenience. Such at the commencement of the present century—and may still exist, for all I know to the contrary—was the case in the 'Härad' of *Skytt*, in Scania, where a singular and praiseworthy custom existed to punish backbiters. When it was alleged against a person that he had told such an untruth of another as to damage his good name and reputation, he was summoned before a jury of his fellows, and, if found guilty of the charge, was condemned, not only to make public retractation of the falsehood, but to the penalty of '*Squaller Pot*,' literally the 'Scandal Tankard;' that is, to provide an ample supply of ale and brandy for the entertainment of the judges of the offence, and others, a sentence at which it was altogether useless for him to demur.

'On an appointed day, the company assembled at the house of the chief individual of the hamlet, when the backbiter stept forward with a glass in his hand, and repeated these words: "What I have said of this or that person is a shameful scandal, and has no ground whatever, and I therefore take the lie back to myself." He then emptied the glass, and received the forgiveness of the aggrieved party. Afterwards, and for the remainder of the evening, he remained a quiet, though *thirsty*, spectator of the way in which the company imbibed the liquid furnished at his expense.'

The Swedish peasantry are great fair and market goers,

p. 333.

LUND HORSE-FAIR.

and this not only for the purpose of disposing of the produce of their little farms, but for the sake of gossip; and that they enjoy themselves to heart's content on these occasions is often somewhat too evident.

One of the most celebrated fairs in the country is that held annually in the cathedral town of Lund, in Scania. It lasts from the beginning of Lent to Easter week; 'and this merry time,' we are told, in substance, 'is to the lower classes what the carnival is to the inhabitants of the southern countries of Europe. The great days are Wednesday in mid-Lent and Ash-Wednesday; and these two days are as much renowned amongst the peasantry in Scania as is Beaumaries fair amongst the French and Italians.

'Ash-Wednesday is in Lund—on account of the horse fair—turned into the noisiest day in the whole year. People from far and near, landed proprietors, bailiffs, and peasants, flock by thousands to the town. One also sees there numbers of horse-jockeys, and amongst them not a few gipsies and Bohemians. He who, like Borrow and Eibert Smidt, delights in the gibberish of these people,—a lingo called "*Romani*," derived from Sanscrit, and interlarded with the slang of all nations,—ought to go to Lund. These men curvet about the streets on steeds that are made up, and look well enough, for the occasion; but when one has purchased them they turn out the veriest jades, and full of cleverly concealed defects.

The fair, besides, presents to the beholder an endless variety of amusing scenes and incidents. Grave citizens, at inns and eating-houses, in cloaks and '*Galloshes*,' or over-shoes, the latter being looked on as the greatest of luxuries; the lower classes in tents that the market

people and the jugglers have erected in the street; the exchange of watches here and there between the peasantry, who ratify the bargain by knocking their hats together with such force as not unfrequently to leave ineffaceable indentations on them; the most determined bargaining, but still the most exorbitant prices paid; and students everywhere playing their practical jokes.

'In spite of all this pressure and turmoil, nevertheless, serious disturbances, drunkenness, or fights seldom, or rather never, take place. The well-known sobriety and phlegmatic disposition of the Scanian peasant cannot be seen to more advantage than here. The only tragic accident that has occurred within the past fifteen years, moreover, was the death of a man by the kick of a vicious horse. The animal happened to belong to the beadle of the university, against whom an action was brought, which was submitted to the academical '*Consistori Minoris.*' But how long the suit lasted, or how many reams of paper in the shape of "Protocols" the unfortunate steed in question was the cause of being expended, is immaterial here. Suffice it to say that the horse fair at Lund still takes place every year as heretofore, and is likely to do so, notwithstanding the protests of the academy and many of the citizens.'

The Swedish peasantry of the present day care but little for manly exercises, such as leaping, foot-racing, and the like. Dancing, of which they are passionately fond, would appear to be the only bodily motion in which they take delight. They seldom, indeed, even walk any distance that can otherwise be got over.

For manly pastimes, with the exception of wrestling,

in which they are once in a time seen to indulge, they are equally lukewarm; and cricket, hockey, quoits, bowls, and similar games, would appear to be almost or altogether unknown to them.

To the art of boxing they are utter strangers; and though on the occasion of a fight, as is not unfrequent after a drinking bout, they do use their hands—too often loaded with stones—in a roundabout way, they for the most part kick and tear each other in the manner of wild beasts, and to catch hold of the enemy's neck-tie, and thereby half throttle him, is another of their warlike manœuvres. Too often, moreover, the combatants make use of heavy billets of wood, as also the butt end of guns, and that *from behind;* and when I have been altogether alone I have had my own head broken even by fellows in a decent position in life. The knife which the peasants usually carry in a leather sheath by their sides, again, is too frequently had recourse to, as the awkward scars so often seen on their faces too surely testify. Some seven or eight years ago this was of every-day occurrence, and no wonder, as a pecuniary fine, most ridiculous in amount—6*d.*, I believe—was the penalty for inflicting a wound with a knife. Now, however, the law is much more stringent, and a man may be imprisoned for the offence; and, as a consequence, one less frequently hears of that weapon being brought into play by the peasants during their quarrels.

Anything in the shape of a fair stand-up fight between man and man is never by any accident to be witnessed in Sweden; and, what is still worse, the bystanders commonly side with the one or the other of the combatants,

and generally with the strongest; and, as a consequence, the unfortunate wight in the minority is pretty sure to go to the wall.

After these observations regarding the peasants' manner of fighting, &c., it is probably needless for me to warn my countrymen from getting into a 'shindy' with them, the chances being they will come off second best, or rather with a good 'licking,' as has unfortunately happened to myself in more than one instance; and as to looking to the Swedish laws for redress, what with the tedious and humdrum way in which legal proceedings are conducted, and the prejudice against foreigners, more especially Englishmen, they might, to my notions, almost as well 'whistle to the winds:' such, at least, has been my experience.

This apathy on the part of the Swedish peasantry to manly exercises and pastimes strikes one the more from the marked contrast in this respect between them and their redoubtable ancestors, the old 'Sea Kings,' whose youth, from an early age, were initiated and trained in all athletic exercises and sports that tended to strengthen and invigorate both body and mind.

Vaulting was a favourite pastime with them, and one in which they greatly excelled. When competing with each other, they would leap across ravines and rivulets, over the backs of men, horses, &c., and to the great endangerment of life and limb, from off comparative precipices to the ground. When perfected in these exercises they—the better to fit themselves for the tented field—would attach considerable weights to their persons; and, even when thus burthened, the distances they could jump,

and the height they could vault, almost exceeds credence. It is related of Gunner, the Icelander, for instance, that, when in full armour, he could leap not only to a greater height than himself, but that as well backwards as forwards. Another native of Iceland, named Skarphedin, is said to have jumped over the river Merkoflirt, which was 24 feet in width, and this notwithstanding both banks were at the time hard frozen and very slippery. Of others it is recorded that their agility was so great, that when unable with their shields to ward off arrows or javelins aimed at them, they would, by springing aside, avoid the deadly shafts; as also, that when fairly hemmed in by the enemy they would vault over their heads, and thus effect their escape.

Clambering up the face of rugged and precipitous rocks was another exercise in which the northern youth excelled. This feat was often attended with great danger, as on the security of the footing and the firmness of the hold their existence often depended. The 'Sagas' speak of individuals who attained to a wonderful proficiency in this achievement. Amongst the rest, the famous Norwegian king, Olof-Tryggwasson, the most distinguished man of his day, not only as regarded warlike exploits, but martial and athletic exercises. It is said of this monarch, that he on one occasion ascended to the summit of the rock Smalsarkorn, which had previously been considered inaccessible, where he affixed his buckler in triumph; on another, when his fleet was lying at anchor in a Norwegian fiord, two of his people, for a wager, competed in climbing up a very jagged mountain that rose nearly precipitously from the water's edge. Owing to the steepness of the ascent, how-

ever, one of them, when half way up, turned back and descended with difficulty; but the other persevered, until at length he found himself on the outer verge of a jutting crag, whence advance or retreat was impossible. The king, noticing his peril and distress, used his best endeavours to prevail on some one of the assembled warriors to proceed to the rescue, but unavailingly, the hazard being thought too imminent. He himself, therefore, after casting aside his mantle, gallantly faced the acclivity, and succeeded in reaching the unfortunate man, whom he took under his arm, and thus bore him in safety to the ground.

Speed of foot, again, was with the Scandinavian youth another great object of ambition. The 'Sagas' speak of individuals—kings amongst the rest—who greatly distinguished themselves, as well by their fleetness as their power of endurance. Of some it was indeed said that they could compete even with the swiftest horse.

Swimming, too, was an exercise in which many of them greatly excelled. But a man in those days was not considered a proficient in the art unless he could swim as well in his clothes as without them for long distances, and that within a given space of time. He was also expected to be able to dive to a great depth, and to remain under water a considerable while. Even when beneath the surface the youths were accustomed to contend and wrestle with one another, and he who obtained the mastery would force the vanquished to the bottom, and keep him there until nearly drowned.

Of all athletic exercises, however, none were more usual, or more enjoyed, than wrestling. The youths thereby increased their strength and capability to endure

hardship; and by constant practice, and competing with each other, gained agility and suppleness of limb. They had two ways of wrestling. In the one everything depended on vigour and strength; but in the other victory was gained by skill and agility.

Youths, at an early age, were also taught the use of every description of arms, of all of which the warrior was expected to be a perfect master. Such stress, indeed, was laid on their education in this respect that an ancient edict ordained:—'That the youths should be exercised duly, because skill in the use of weapons was not only an adornment to a man, but absolutely needful to him, the day and the hour being uncertain when he might be compelled to make use of them.' In furtherance of this object certain localities (called '*Lekvallar*,' or '*Lekplatser*,' literally playgrounds) were therefore set apart for the special purpose; and here, encouraged by the plaudits of the congregated multitudes, and the smiles and approbation of the fair sex, who were always present on these occasions, they vied with each other for the mastery.

Archery was one of the military exercises in which the youth were much practised. They used both the cross and the long-bow, and attained to considerable perfection with both. It is recorded of Olof-Tryggwasson, that on one occasion he performed a somewhat similar feat to that related of William Tell, viz., having sent an arrow through a small platter placed on the head of a child without in any way injuring the latter. The object of the old Northman was not only to direct the shaft aright, but to impel it with so much force as to penetrate both shield and defensive armour. In the 'Sagas,' indeed, we read of a famous

chieftain, 'whose strength of arm was such that he could send even a *blunted* arrow through a raw bull's hide, when dangling loosely in the air.'

Other of their warlike exercises consisted in slinging and hurling stones, which, from constant practice, they could impel long distances with great precision, and this as well with one hand as the other. In their naval battles —often fought when their war-galleys were some little distance apart—these formidable means of annoyance were frequently had recourse to.

The youth were likewise trained in the use of the sword, the javelin, the battle-axe, the buckler, &c., in the handling of which they attained to great proficiency.

The skill of the old Northmen in the use of arms was really wonderful. It is asserted, for instance, that with their ponderous battle-axes—the most formidable and dreaded of their weapons—they could not only ward off the thrust of a spear or sword, but actually cleave in twain the arrow at the very instant of its coming in contact with their person; that with their hands they could catch the javelin in its progress through the air, in which case they would hurl back the weapon on the foe; that they could wield the sword with the like dexterity with the left as the right hand, and that by suddenly shifting it from the one to the other they often thereby disconcerted the enemy; that they could fight with the sword in one hand and the javelin in the other; and at the same instant of time they could hurl a spear with each hand at different objects, and that, too, with great precision.

Even the amusements of the northern youth were of a manly character, and all tending to the same end—to

harden the body and fit them for the tented field.

To run on snow-skates, and thus traverse the snow-clad 'fjälls' and forests of their fatherland, was a favourite pastime in the winter time; as was also skating, of which they would seem to have been proficients, the 'Sagas' describing them as 'gliding over the frozen waters with the speed of the wind.'

'*Boll-Kastning*,' a kind of 'hockey,' as it would seem, which was played on the ice, was a favourite game with them. Many individuals appear to have taken part in it, and not unfrequently, we are told, 'all the people in the neighbourhood assembled at the spot to witness the pastime.'

The sword game was another and favourite pastime of the Scandinavian youth; but it was difficult of execution, and somewhat dangerous. The performer, whose hands were unprotected by gauntlets, was provided with three naked swords, one of which (in the manner of the juggler's balls) must always be in the air, and in its descent be caught either by the point or the hilt. Some greatly excelled at this game. A Sigismund, and an Endrid Illbride, are spoken of in the 'Sagas' as masters of the art; but none were more so than Olof-Tryggwasson. It is related of this very distinguished man, that even when his famous war galley, the '*Ormen-Länge*,' or the Long Serpent (of which in another place), was being propelled at speed through the water by oars, or rather sweeps, he would, on the narrow ledge projecting beyond her sides, make the circuit of the enormous vessel whilst practising the 'Svärds Lek,' a feat so wonderful that Edid, who was also highly skilled in that as well as other exercises requiring dex-

terity, was filled with astonishment, and when challenged by the king to do the like exclaimed, 'God's angels will not support me in the air in like manner as they do thee.'

The youth were addicted to the chase, and being accustomed from an early age to the use of weapons, they soon learnt to try their prowess with the numerous wild beasts with which the forests abound. Shedding of blood was in those days the passion of the Northmen; and even children, in their pastimes, would not willingly associate with those who had not killed some ravenous animal. There were not a few amongst them, moreover, who in their tender years had imbrued their hands in human gore. 'Eigel Skalagrimsson, in Iceland, when only 12 years old,' so the Saga tells us, 'had already slain two men; and Thorkel Krafla was of the like age when he gave Thorkel Silfre his bane.' 'Unrestrained passion' in youths was looked upon by the old Northmen with much more favour than timidity of disposition, which gave no hope of manliness and vigour in after life.

Youths thus educated and trained, and with their imaginations constantly excited by hearing little else whilst under their parents' roof, and at 'banquets,' than recitals of the adventures and battles of heroes by sea and land, soon became, like their sires, emulous to win a name in the crimsoned field. This warlike feeling being almost universal, 'milksops,' as may well be supposed, were looked on not only by their comrades, but the other sex, with feelings somewhat akin to contempt. We read, for instance, of a chieftain named Kettil Rammurs, who thus addressed his son Thorsten, then 18 years of age.

'Young men in my early days,' said the old warrior,

'conducted themselves very differently from the present. They now sit at home, hang over the fireplace, fill their bellies, and are not ashamed to be twitted with their pusillanimous conduct. Formerly they undertook creditable things. Danger they despised, and sought after land and wealth by manly actions. It was the custom of great men—kings, jarls, and others our equals—to engage in buccaneering expeditions, thereby to win renown and riches; and the wealth a man thus gained was laid with him in the tomb. Even if the son inherited riches he could not, nevertheless, properly support his rank unless he and his people occasionally took part in piratical voyages, and acquired treasure and a name, and thus trod in his father's footsteps. I myself have gained wealth and honour by courting perils of all kinds, and engaging in many hard-fought battles. I presume thou understandest not "*Härmannalag*," or the laws of chivalry; and I have, therefore, thought it right to tell thee this. It is now my desire that thou give up this disgraceful inactivity, and that, as thy kinsfolk, thou wilt gain for thyself riches and consideration. Thou art, besides, of an age that it is time for thee to try how far fortune will favour thee.'

'Egged on sufficiently am I now, if that can effect good,' replied the youth, as he rose, angered, from his seat, and with these words he left the house. But the jobation he had received from his father had the desired effect. He took to heart the parental admonition, and from that day forward turned over a new life, and in process of time became—the 'Saga' informs us—a great and distinguished man.

Thus nurtured in the daily practice of warlike exercises,

all tending to harden the body and supple the limbs, and in the full confidence of their own powers, the youths grew up to be healthy, vigorous, and powerful men, and formed a race which were not inaptly likened unto an old oak forest in a storm; and on hundreds of occasions in after life, when engaged in buccaneering expeditions in foreign lands, these acquirements stood them in good stead when scaling the fortresses of the enemy, or when engaged in other perilous enterprises. The extraordinary long marches of the Vikingar, the celerity of their movements, and their great skill in the use of all kinds of arms, explain, in no small degree, the secret of their marvellous successes.

After a perusal of the exploits of the old Northmen, to say nothing of those of Charles XII., Gustavus Adolphus, and other of their warrior kings, of whom the Swedes are justly so proud, one would expect to see in the Swedish peasantry of the present day something rather out of the common. Such at least was my idea; but on this matter I altogether miscalculated, for instead of the high and bold bearing naturally to be looked for from men whose progenitors were, from their daring and heroic deeds, the terror of the civilized world, they have, as it strikes me, rather a humble and cringing look. The Dalecarlians, who so greatly distinguished themselves under the great Gustavus Vasa, struck me as being the best 'cut' of peasants that came under my observation.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHARACTER OF THE PEASANTRY.

CHARACTER OF THE MEN AND WOMEN.—WANT OF CHASTITY.—LAWS.—CHASTITY OF OLD.—LAWS.—HOW LEJDOLF WAS PUNISHED.—MISDEEDS OF THE MONKS.—A MONK CAUGHT IN A NET.—A MONK WARNED BY A LULLABY.—MONKISH SUPERSTITIONS.—TALE OF THE CHARMED BAG.—EXPULSION OF THE MONKS.

FROM a perusal of the foregoing pages the reader will have been enabled to form a pretty good idea of the habits and ways of the Swedish peasant; and it therefore only remains for me to say that though, as with other people, he may have his faults, it is possible they are more than counterbalanced by his good qualities. Amongst these may be included honesty (as regards the rural districts, at least, for in Stockholm, Gottenburg, and other towns, many of the poorer classes, as in other towns all over the world, may not unlikely be corrupt and degenerate enough). Such at least has been my own experience; for during all my wanderings in different parts of the country —and at times my little property was greatly exposed—I cannot remember ever losing anything of value. To his credit, be it moreover said, the peasant is true and faithful —and that to the backbone—to his king and fatherland.

The peasant women have also many good qualities. They are frugal, thrifty, and good managers, and are reported to make excellent wives and mothers. They are, besides, warmhearted and charitable, often making great personal sacrifices to assist those in distress, such as orphans, and the like.

A want of chastity amongst the unmarried women is, however, said to be a rather common failing, and the imputation would seem to bear a semblance of truth, because, should a girl be so unfortunate as to meet with an 'accident,' she, so far from being looked on with something like horror, as with us in England, loses but little 'caste' in Sweden, and, if in a menial capacity, has little or no difficulty in procuring another situation. Until such time as she is 'betrothed,' which, as said, often happens long prior to her marriage, it is to be hoped and trusted that a spinster very carefully guards her virtue, but after the first-named ceremony has been gone through, and presents exchanged between the affianced parties, it may be, as M. Holmburg says, 'the lover considers himself entitled to the like privileges as the benediction of the clergyman would bestow.'

In the rural districts 'accidents' of the kind named to girls of the peasant class are probably not more numerous than in other countries, as will be seen by the accompanying statistical account, the latest of the kind that has come into my possession. They would seem, however, to be greatly on the increase.

The proportion of natural children to those born in wedlock in Sweden, in 1749, was as 1 to 49; between 1775 and 1795, as 1 to 27; between 1795 and 1800, as

1 to 20; between 1800 and 1805, as 1 to 17; between 1805 and 1810, as 1 to 15; between 1810 and 1820, as 1 to 14; and in 1840, as 1 to 13.

But in the towns, usually the sinks of every iniquity, the proportion of natural children to those born in wedlock is, I believe, very much greater. In Stockholm, at least, in the year 1848—and no more recent return has met my eye—the legitimates born numbered 1558, and the illegitimates no fewer than 1301.

May not the frequency of illegitimate children in Sweden be in part owing to the Swedish law of bastardy? for as the woman is not allowed *to swear* to the father of her child, her mere statement, unless there be corroborative evidence, goes to the winds, and a man, not having the fear of its paternity laid at his door, is, in consequence, too apt to take advantage of her good nature.

Although the Swedish peasant girls may not be altogether immaculate, yet, to their honour be it said, when once they enter the marriage state their conduct, as a rule, is exemplary, and it is but seldom one hears of their entering on evil courses.

What penalties, if any, are at the present day incurred, or were incurred two or three centuries ago, by females infringing the laws of chastity, are unknown to me; but as regarded those of the higher classes of society, they were formerly very severe, as will be seen by the following ordinance promulgated in the year 1662, where it is enacted—

'That should any widow or maiden allow herself to be debauched, whether by a "*frälse*" or "*ofrälse*" man, that is, by one of the nobility or a private person, her property is

forfeited to the next heir, and she can never again associate with noble society. If she permit her own "*Fästman,*" or the individual to whom she is betrothed, to be intimate with her, both of them forfeit two years' rental of their respective estates to the hospital, the estates in the while remaining in pledge to that institution. And, further to mark the backslidings of the offending woman, she shall not be allowed to take part with other noble ladies either at a wedding or a christening. And in the company in which she may happen to be present she is always to take the lowest place. The son, moreover, that is begotten before the nuptials is not permitted to bear a spear either in his armorial bearings or at a tournament of the nobles.'

Though purity in women of the peasant class may not at the present day in Sweden be held in the highest possible estimation, such would not appear to have been the case with their ancestors, the old Northmen. We are, indeed, told they looked on modesty and chastity in a maiden as her greatest ornament, without which she could neither reckon on the esteem of her friends nor expect to acquire an honourable suitor; and that though she was permitted to receive the visits of the other sex, provided they were relatives or intimates, her father kept at a distance all '*Hus-gängare,*' or such young fellows as by their too frequent visits to the daughter of the house, gave reason to suspect their designs were improper. He was, in short, as tenacious of his daughter's honour as his own, and guarded it as he would the apple of his eye.

The laws in those days for the protection of females were exceedingly severe; and if we are to judge from the few instances recorded in the 'Sagas' of their infringement,

there is good reason to believe that the maidens who then strayed from the paths of virtue were very few in number.

By the old Icelandic law, which dates something like a thousand years back, it is enacted, for instance, 'That he who against her will kisses a "free-born" maiden, or takes other liberties with her exceeding the bounds of propriety, shall be banished the country. And even should such familiarities have taken place with her own consent, and that the relations take up the matter, the offender shall be mulcted in a fine of three marks.'

With the like object (the protection of females) the Gottland law, which is nearly as ancient as the Icelandic, provides, 'That if thou takest a woman by the wrist, and she complains, the fine is half a *mark;* if by the elbow, eight *örtuga;* if by the shoulders, five *öre;* if by the upper part of the instep, half a *mark;* if between the knee and the calf of the leg, eight *örtuga;* if above the knee, five *öre;* but if a hand higher up, then is that grip an impudent grip, and is called a shameless man's grip; in that case there is no fine, for when matters have proceeded thus far, most females admit of such liberties.'

The last-named law, in reference to merely romping with a girl, enacts as follows: 'If thou knockest the cock (the upper or ornamental part) from off a woman's head-gear, and that intentionally, so that the half of her head be thereby bared, the fine is a *mark;* but if the whole of her head be bared, two *marks;* should thou rend asunder one of the two fastenings of her dress, the fine is two *örtuga;* if both, half a *mark;* and if she be so mishandled as to fall to the ground, one *mark.* Should thou push her so about that her clothes are deranged, the fine is eight

örtuga; if they fly up to the calf of the leg, half a *mark;* if to the knee, one *mark;* but if still higher up, two *marks.*'

The ancient laws designate a girl who has strayed from the path of virtue as 'dependent on the compassion of her parents.' They had, therefore, the power of treating her in whatever manner they pleased, either to pardon her fault, or to shut her out altogether from the rights of a modest daughter.

In the event of a 'free-born' maiden being seduced, which was of less frequent occurrence, and that reparation by marriage was not afterwards made by the offender, the father or brother, as the case might be, usually exacted a terrible vengeance.

'It happened on one occasion,' so we read in the old chronicles, 'that a Swede, named Uborni, sailed from the mainland over to Iceland, with a company of eleven men; and the season being then advanced, he and his people passed the winter there, under the hospitable roof of one Lejdolf; but abusing the kindness shown him, he seduced Thormer, the daughter of his host, and got her with child.

'In the following spring when the ice broke up, Uborni, without letting his intentions be known to any one, privily left the house of his kind host with the intention of returning to his native country. Lejdolf, highly enraged at his base and cowardly conduct, lost no time in pursuing the fugitive; and, overtaking him just as he was about to embark, insisted that he should retrace his steps, marry his daughter, and take up his abode with him for the remainder of his life. Uborni refused compliance, and a desperate combat ensued between the warriors and their followers. When, however, several of the runaway's men

had fallen, he, to save his life, though sorely against his will, was at length necessitated to accede to the profferred terms.

'Some time afterwards, however, Lejdolf had occasion to leave home for a while, when Uborni, taking advantage of his absence, clandestinely fled from his bride! But this double treachery availed him not; for so soon as his incensed father-in-law learnt what had happened, he followed on the steps of the traitor, and coming up with him, parleyed not, but at once put both him and all his people to the sword.'

But after the introduction of Christianity into Scandinavia, now more than a thousand years ago, and that the monks had overrun the country, the morals of the females, so we are told by Swedish historians, would seem to have anything but improved; these men being accustomed to wander about everywhere in the vicinity of their cloisters, and not only debauch the peasants' wives, but induce the latter to supply them with the best their husbands' larder and cellar afforded.

Amongst innumerable stories respecting the scandalous proceedings of the sanctified hypocrites in question, we have the following, which there is good reason to believe is at least founded on fact.

'Several hundred years ago there lived at Esgärdt, near to the royal residence of Husaby, a peasant whose young and handsome wife was on too intimate terms with a monk belonging to the neighbouring cloister. One night the husband returned home unexpectedly, and having reason to suspect all was not right, he forthwith spread a "wolf-net" in front of the door, and when, on his afterwards

entering the room, the monk in the darkness attempted to escape, he was at once enveloped in its folds; and though eventually the "old goat" succeeded in extricating himself, his coat—which is still preserved in Husaby church—remained in the net, and proved his betrayer.'

From the above, and similar tales, originated '*Sagas*' and '*Visas*' (histories and ballads) out of number, many of which are still extant.

They usually commence with a description of the way in which the monk is entertained by the peasant's wife, and that in which he entertained her in return. 'But the peasant was not then at home.' They then go on to relate that the master of the house returns unlooked for, and finding how matters were going on, the monk's back has to 'pay the piper' for his misdeeds, and conclude with these words, 'You'll believe me now that the peasant was at home.'

The following lullaby, which in parts of the country is still, we are told, frequently sung by young mothers, gives a pretty good idea of the nature of the ballads in question.

The monk, it is to be observed, comes to the house when the peasant himself *is* at home. The wife catches a glimpse of her paramour as he hurriedly passes the '*Glugg*' (a small opening in the wall, as said, covered with parchment, or the like, to admit light), the then substitute for a window; and to warn him of the enemy thus sings to her baby whilst rocking its cradle:—

'Och skymtar Du för Gluggen,
Kär wännen min!
Och signe Gud din skugge,
Men Kom nu intet in!

'Jag tror att den Karln,
Är bäd willer och galn,
Som inte kan höra, att far är hemma!
Wyss! Wyss! Far är hemma!
Söte vännen min!'

The peasant, who is all attention, pricks his ears—as well he might—and inquires of his wife, 'What is it thou art singing?' but she, instead of replying, continues her lullaby:—

'Den, som barn skall gäte,*
Kär vännen min!
Får ha så mänget läte;
Kom nu intet in!

'Och Kom mig i morgon,
Kär vännen min!
Efter Ottesängen,
Men Kom nu intet in!

'Jag tror att den Karln,
Är bäd viller och galn,
Som inte kan höra, att far är hemma,
Wyss! Wyss! Far är hemma!
Söte vännen min!'

I insert this ballad in the original, as it may interest those more conversant with the Swedish language than myself, by whom it is incapable of translation. The substance of it, however, is 'that the monk, her dear friend, must be both a fool and a madman not to understand by her lullaby that her husband is at home, and that, for all the world, he must not allow either himself or his shadow to be seen near the 'Glugg,' or window; and concludes with requesting him to come to her on the following morning after matins.'

To say nothing of their misdeeds of the nature spoken of, the monks are accused of not only having intentionally,

* An old word, signifying to tend, or take care of.

and for purposes of their own, to have kept the people in darkness, but to have instilled into their minds no end of superstitions. They, moreover, made use of the name of God and the saints, the prayers of the Church, and passages of Holy Writ, to drive away sicknesses, and evils of all kinds; thus profaning God's name and Word for '*Signerie*,' or sorcery purposes; and because they well knew that heathen superstitions and unbelief were deeply implanted in the minds of the people, they mixed up therewith Christian superstitions of their own invention. Thus Steel and Flint, in memory of Thor, the vanquisher of the 'Troll,' were by them always held over the patient, after which followed the mumbling, or chanting, of prayers to Christ and St Peter, the Virgin Mary and the saints.

However erroneous the notion may have been, it would seem that, in the minds of the common people, the monks were more or less versed in magic; for when many poor creatures suffered at the stake for witchcraft, they, at their trial, always asserted that it was from these men they had learnt their '*Konst*,' or art.

In connection with the monks we have the following amusing story, which is, I believe, perfectly well authenticated.

On one occasion, when the Bishop Svedberg, then a scholar at the diocesan town of Skara, went about the country to collect '*Djeknepenningar*,' or money for the maintenance of the poorer students, he came to the house of a peasant whose wife, whilst hospitably entertaining him, complained that she could never succeed in rearing her calves. The facetious scholar immediately replied, 'he could quickly remedy that evil if she would only give him

a piece of linen cloth and a needle and thread.' The woman, who had been told how very wise the scholars were, rejoiced greatly on hearing this, and forthwith supplied him with the required materials.

With these he made up a little bag, wrote a few lines on a slip of paper, which he placed within it, and further secured it with a piece of string. This charmed bag—as the wife considered it to be—he handed to her, telling her at the same time to suspend it to the neck of her next calf, in which case the animal would surely survive; warning her, however, on no account to open it, as in that case all manner of evils would befall both herself and her household.

The merry scholar smiled on thinking of the amusing trick he had played the woman; and after having been treated to the best the house afforded, took his departure.

Many years passed, in which while the former scholar, after undergoing many vicissitudes, had become Bishop of Skara. One day when, with the Consistory, he sat on the judgment-seat, an old woman was brought before him arraigned for 'Trolldom,' or witchcraft. The bishop was greatly grieved, because, if the crime was proved, she must be doomed to be burnt alive. It was alleged against her, 'that by means of a charmed bag she had preserved the lives, not only of her own calves, but those of her neighbours.' The poor creature confessed to the charge, and then related that upwards of 30 years previously a scholar had given her the bag in question, and with tears in her eyes acknowledged that from the first day of her having made use of it in the way mentioned it had gone well with all the animals.

The bishop requested to see the charmed bag, which,

on being opened, was found to contain the identical slip of paper on which he himself, when a 'Djekne,' had written the following lines :—

'Calf white, or calf red,
If thou wilt not live then die thou must.'

The bishop now related to his coadjutors his adventure, and acquitted the frightened old woman, and with a little present that he made her, dismissed her, well satisfied, to her home.

It was during the reign of the great Gustavus Vasa, now upwards of 300 years ago, when the doctrines of Luther superseded those of the Pope, that the monks—or at least the greater part of them—were ignominiously expelled from Sweden, and the monasteries and nunneries demolished; and though the misdeeds of many of these men had been manifold, there were others who had so conducted themselves as to win the love and regard of the people amongst whom they dwelt, and who, in consequence, greatly regretted their departure.

This was more especially the case with the peasantry near to Upsala, who petitioned the king to allow them to remain in the country, promising, that if these were let alone, they themselves would maintain them. 'These men,' they said, 'sung for them when they laboured, and in war-time, or when suffering from hunger, or oppressed by their lieges, had, by their holy example, comforted and strengthened them. To the sick they had also frequently come with both medicine and religious consolation. The nuns, moreover, had taught their little daughters to sew and read, as also to sing many pretty ballads about love and knightly deeds.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

FEW SURNAMES.—DRESS.—DRESS IN WINGÅKER.—CIRCUMSTANCES.—HOUSES.—FURNITURE.—GARDENS.—FOOD AND DRINK.—BARK BREAD.—DIRTY HABITS.—EARLY RISING.—HOME MANUFACTURES.—ITINERANT SHOEMAKERS AND TAILORS.—SMOKING.—DRUNKENNESS.—LAW AGAINST IT.—SWEARING.—LAW AGAINST IT.—POOR LAWS.—SUMMARY.

But few of the peasantry have surnames, and, in consequence, their children simply take their father's Christian name in addition to their own. For example: if a man is named Sven Larsson his son will be Ian or Nils Svenson, and his daughter Maria or Britta Svensdaughter. The inconvenience that this system causes would be great, were it not that in matters of business the residence of the party is usually attached to his name. In the army, to prevent the confusion that would otherwise arise from this cause, fictitious names are given to the soldiers, such as those of various animals, birds, trees, &c.

The costume of the peasantry it would be next to impossible to describe, from its differing so considerably in every province, or it may even be within its several parishes. The only thing that may be considered characteristic of

Sweden is the head-dress of the women, the '*Hufond Duk*,' or kerchief, which is almost universal over the whole country, but varying in value, from the simple checked cotton up to the rich brocade satin with its deep fringes. Whether plain or brilliant, however, it seems to me to set off a pretty face better than even a French bonnet.

Wingäker, however, which is situated near to the Lake Malaren, having obtained some degree of celebrity through the peculiarity of costume and manners, and also, to a certain extent, through the character and outward appearance of the people, a few words respecting it may not be out of place.

The old chronicles do not give us any information as to its first inhabitants; but as the name is considered to be an abbreviation of '*Wikinga Aker*,' that is, the field of the *Vikings*, or sea-kings, the inference is drawn that it was formerly the abode of those redoubtable pirates. Tradition says, moreover, that in days of yore there existed an open, fair way from Wingäker to the sea, near the town of Nyköping, which was made use of by these men. The remains of a large ship, which were discovered about 80 years ago, after a very dry summer, in a marshy field near the Wingäker River, seems to confirm the belief. The vessel was deeply embedded in the mud, but one gunwale, in a tolerably good state of preservation, showed plainly that the ship had been constructed for eight oars, and her dimensions were such that she could not possibly have been afloat in that river such as it now is.

The outward appearance of the inhabitants of Wingäker has in later years continued unchanged, and differs

widely from that of the inhabitants of neighbouring parishes, to which circumstance the reluctance of the peasantry to marry out of their own parishes mainly contributes. Their stature is above the middle size, the face of an oval form, the nose straight, the forehead receding so as often to be in one line with the nose, the skin fine and white, the hair dark—generally black, the eyes blue, and, in the women, frequently brown. They are of a merry disposition; simple, friendly, obliging, hospitable, and polite. Their manners unconstrained and easy, a natural consequence of their frequent travels and their intercourse with strangers.

The costume of the Wingäker peasantry is very old. In 1749, they determined never to discontinue the same; and in 1755, their dress was, by royal mandate, defined both as regards form and colour, and fines were imposed on those who refused to wear the same, though neither very serviceable for the preservation of health, nor suitable to agricultural pursuits.

The every-day dress of the females consists of a yellow woollen petticoat, over which they wear a large close-fitting coat of white cloth, tucked up towards the back, with black cuffs and black collar, a red or yellow apron, and a handsome white ruff. Their holy-day dress is composed of an ordinary petticoat, green close coat with green jacket, or a brown close coat with blue jacket, white shirt sleeves, embroidered girdle of red morocco, and a many-coloured pocket. The costume of the unmarried and married women differs only in the head-dress, and it ought here to be observed that it is the custom with both scrupulously to conceal the hair. The head-dress of the unmarried consists

of two rolls of linen covered with red cloth, underneath which the hair is hidden. On the forehead it is connected by two rows of ribbons. Over this head-dress the married wear a scarlet cap with flat crown, and embroidered with orange-coloured silk, and over all a white handkerchief. The so-called bride's dress deserves to be specially noticed. It consists of a red petticoat, green apron, two or more silk ribbons hanging down from the back of the head, a few silk handkerchiefs stuck in at the girdle, an elaborately wrought brooch, or brass buckle, on the bosom, and embroidered gloves. The more wealthy girls usually buy such a bride's-dress long before they are betrothed, in order to be prepared when, and in case, a suitor appears; but those girls who cannot afford to purchase themselves, get one from their future husbands.

The men in western Wingåker wear white, and in east Aker blue cloth coats, with blue cuffs and narrow blue stripes on the collar, short yellow leathern breeches, and white woollen stockings, and, in rainy weather, blue cloth over-coats.

The inhabitants of the parishes mentioned are somewhat nomade in their habits. In that respect taking after their reputed forefathers, the famous Vikings; as for a considerable portion of the year—leaving, in the while, their wives and servants to look after the farm—they visit all the neighbouring districts with the little they have to dispose of, though, as it is believed, with small profit to themselves.

To proceed. The circumstances of the Swedish peasantry, as may be supposed, vary greatly. Such of them

as own their farms, or hold them of the Crown on easy terms, are generally exceedingly well off; and even the '*Torpare,*' or cotter, who rents his little plot of ground from another, having a cow or two, a few sheep and goats, and, it may be, a horse and a pig, has not much to complain of. The mere day-labourer, of whom, however, there are very few indeed in the rural districts, is the worst off; for should work fail him, he has not, like the cotter, his little farm to fall back on for support.

The houses of the Swedish peasantry are pretty large and commodious, containing two habitable rooms at the least, and one for culinary purposes, baking, &c. They are constructed of squared pine-logs placed lengthwise on each other—the interstices being first filled with moss—which are firmly mortised together at the ends. The roof commonly consists of shingle covered with turf or layers of birch-bark. Tiles, in the poorer districts at least, are seldom seen. At times the outbuildings, consisting of barn, stable, cattle-house, &c., are detached; but at others they constitute three sides of a quadrangle, and the dwelling-house the fourth. Glazed windows, and those of a pretty large size, are universal. The rooms, or rather room, for in the winter-time, at least, the family seldom inhabit more than one, are warm and comfortable. This is greatly owing to the introduction of a '*Spjel,*' or slide, in the upper part of the stove or chimney, as the case may be, which can be closed or withdrawn at pleasure; and when, therefore, the wood of which the fire consists is reduced to ashes, this is shut, and the heat, which can now no longer escape up the chimney, is thrown into the apartment, where it is retained for a long time. In parts of the

country a good deal of turf is burnt; but coals, in the rural districts at least, are never to be seen.

With the reader's permission, we will now take a look at the interior of the house.

On entering—and it is not the custom previously to knock at the door—you generally find a pretty large apartment, which serves at once for a sitting, dining, and bedroom. In this room you will see nearly all the members of the household assembled; and if at all acquainted, you are expected to go round and shake each one cordially by the hand, observing merely the law of priority as to rank and age. This done, you are requested to *step forward* and take a seat; and should you sit down near the door, you are, as a matter of politeness, urgently pressed to move up to a more honourable seat at the upper end of the apartment.

The furniture, &c., of this consists of a large deal table, and, it may be, a chair or so, a loom, one or more spinning-wheels, and the like number of deal sofas, which, on the removal of the seat, disclose beds adapted, when drawn out, to hold two or three sleepers. The resting-place of the master and mistress of the house is a veritable bed, often in a recess, which is generally provided with curtains; and above it there is suspended from the roof what appears to be a stout bell-pull, but which, in reality, is for the occupants of the bed to lay hold of, and assist themselves in rising. A loud-ticking clock and a small book-shelf are seldom wanting in the room. Overhead, again, one sees a goodly store of bread—usually large thin cakes with a hole in the middle—strung on a pole or poles suspended longitudinally to the roof. The floor is strewed

with sprigs of the spruce-pine, or juniper, as said, hacked into small pieces.

Generally the apartment has an open fire-place, but at times a stove; and when after dark the whole scene is lit up with slips, somewhat resembling laths, of blazing pitch-pine, which with the peasantry almost universally supply the place of candles, it altogether gives the impression of home comfort and cheeriness, very welcome indeed to a weary and chilled traveller.

Within, or rather beyond the apartment thus described, or on the other side of the entrance, is another, where generally hang the family's Sunday clothes. This is a spare bed-room, but as it is seldom fired in winter, the honour of being lodged there is greater than the comfort.

The kitchen, usually of a somewhat small size, is either situated between the two rooms spoken of, or at the end of the building.

I have here spoken, be it observed, of the houses of the well-to-do peasantry, those of the poorer classes being for the most part of an inferior description. Even these, however, are infinitely superior to the mud hovels one meets with in the wilds of Ireland and Scotland.

There is generally a little plot of ground, in the shape of a garden, attached to the peasant's house; but he would not seem to be any very great lover of horticulture, as it seldom contains other than cabbages, turnips, and such like common vegetables. Once now and then a straggling apple or other fruit tree is to be seen, but this is rather the exception than the rule.

Usually, however, there is some strong-scented herb to be found in it, that will afford a leaf or sprig on Sunday

morning, for the young females of the family to put in their psalm book, which is always carried to church in a clean white pocket handkerchief.

The general absence of trees about the peasant's homestead, particularly in the more northern parts of the country, must have been observed by every traveller, but possibly this arises from the owner being actuated by a feeling akin to that attributed to the American back-woodsman, who, buried in an interminable forest, is said to look on a champaign country as the most beautiful in the world.

The better class of peasants, as a rule, live well, one at least finds in their houses rye or oat bread in abundance, milk, butter, cheese, &c., as also pork, and often beef or mutton, but these are always *salted*, the lower classes entertaining something approaching to aversion to *fresh meat;* common vegetables, moreover, especially potatoes, they are very rarely without. Porridge or stirabout, whether of rye or oat meal, is, however, their most common food. Their usual beverage is water or small-beer, and small enough it is in all conscience, which they brew themselves. Some few years ago they used also to distil their own '*Finkel,*' or brandy, which answered the double purpose of furnishing a supply of grain for the cattle, and enabling them to get tipsy rather too often; but now the distillation of the liquor in question, excepting to licensed parties, is very strictly prohibited. Coffee is pretty generally found with the peasants; but tea seldom or never, and when produced, whether by them or the better classes, is literally *Tea-watten* or tea-water, as they call it, that is, a tea-spoonful of tea to a cauldron of water.

The fare of the poorer peasants is, of course, of a somewhat coarser kind than that of their richer neighbours, but speaking generally, they have still a sufficiency of the necessaries of life.

That they frequently subsist on bread made from the bark of trees,* as travellers have told us, is not true, or at least has rarely occurred of late years, and then only in particular districts, and after a succession of bad seasons. In former times, when Sweden was in some degree dependent on foreign countries for a supply of grain, and when, during a period of war, that supply was cut off, or that there was a general failure of the home crops, such undoubtedly has happened; but now that the country produces within itself more than is needful for the consumption of the inhabitants, coupled with the wise provision made by the government in forming magazines during years of abundance, such an unwholesome substitute for bread is not likely again to be had general resource to.

Speaking generally, the houses and persons of the peasantry are very dirty, and the practice which is so common amongst them for the whole family to sleep in one and the same room, often huddled together like so many pigs, must be shockingly injurious to health. They would, moreover, seem to have a great aversion to fresh air, and seldom willingly admit it into their houses during either summer or winter; and it is for this reason, I presume, that the windows are almost invariably nailed down. They

* The bark bread from the inner rind of the birch-tree, which is perfectly white, and, when mixed with rye-meal, not unpleasant to the taste; but it is not considered nutritious, and affects the bowels when made use of for a long period.

rarely take off the whole of their clothes at night, generally only their outer garments; and seldom wash themselves thoroughly more than once a week, and that on the Saturday night, so that the state of their persons may be more readily conceived than described. It is probably owing to this want of cleanliness that certain disorders—the itch more particularly—are so prevalent amongst them.

A circumstance which occurred at the house of a well-to-do peasant in the Wermeland Finn forests, where, during my rambles, I took up my quarters for several consecutive nights, will go far to bear me out in saying that the habits of the class in question are none of the most cleanly. We all slept in the same apartment, a pretty large one, and I myself on a sort of sofa-bed in one corner of it. Soon after daylight every morning, the mother, a pretty dark-haired young woman in dishabille, was regularly accustomed to seat herself on a chair before the open fireplace, holding in her arms in somewhat the fashion of a trussed fowl a six months' baby, that it might relieve nature, the dirty creature not taking the trouble to provide even a tub, or other utensil, to receive the filth.

The Swedish peasantry are generally early risers, and even in the depth of winter are usually up and moving at three or four o'clock in the morning, so that for several hours before daylight one hears the whirr of the spinning-wheel within-doors, and the sound of the flail without; and though the days are very short, they are thus enabled to get through as much labour as at midsummer.

The peasants, those that are well to do at least, always grow their own flax, and the females of the household weave all their household linen, and perhaps a little

in addition which they dispose of. They also weave their own woollen clothes, as well for the male as the female branches of the family. The peasants, in fact, are the great manufacturers of coarse goods in Sweden, or were so at least in the time of M. Forsell, who flourished some 20 or 30 years ago, for we are told by him their looms produced 13,463,000 ells of cotton and woollen cloths, whereas those of the so-called manufacturers produced only 383,000 ells.

When they kill cattle, and the wealthier peasants generally slaughter a cow, or an ox, at the least, together with two or three sheep, and one or more pigs, in the fall of the year, they tan the whole or greater part of the skins, and about twice during that period they are visited by an itinerant shoemaker, who remains with them for several days for the purpose of converting the leather into shoes and boots for the whole of the household. I say itinerant advisedly, because many of these disciples of Crispin have hardly a home of their own, but are constantly moving about from one place to another in the course of their vocation; and it is the same with the tailors, who to equip the male part of the family with clothes likewise pay periodical visits to the homestead.

The peasants, of the rural districts I speak, are all more or less versed in some handicraft or other. One and all are adepts in the use of the axe, and can 'carpenter' tolerably well, and having tools, are accustomed not only to make the needful repairs in the house or on the premises, but to construct simple articles of household furniture, or it may be agricultural implements. The peasant is, in fact, a tolerable mechanic, and there are few things he can-

not turn his hand to, as for instance, shoe his horse on occasion.

From the above details it will be seen, that even if he reside in the wilds of the forest he has most of the comforts and necessaries of life at his command, and is therefore in great degree independent of the outer world.

The Swedish peasant is a great smoker, and even the wife does not at all times eschew a pipe; many of them chew tobacco and snuff, the latter being usually stowed away between the lower lip and the teeth, often, indeed, they indulge in both these propensities to excess.

And though it is with regret that I say it, he is also a great drunkard. '*Finkel,*' or potato brandy, is, in short, the curse of the country; it stupifies the faculties of the people and makes them old before their time; and it is to this cause alone that I can attribute, what I have a thousand times remarked, the greater quickness and intelligence of the children as compared with that of the grown-up people. When sober, I have always found the Swedish peasant civil and obliging, but when drunk—which is far too often the case—like other drunken people all over the world, he is a great brute.

Some half-dozen years ago, when brandy was allowed to be made by the peasants themselves, and could be bought at the shops for little more than a shilling the gallon, the peasants drank it like so much water, but since the introduction of comparatively heavy excise duties, coupled with stringent restrictive laws respecting its manufacture, the price of this attractive poison has risen considerably, which has led to a very sensible improvement.

As a proof of the utter uselessness of prohibitory

measures against seductive vices, I may mention that up to a very recent period (when it was somewhat modified) a special law existed in Sweden against drunkenness on pain of personal degradation, imprisonment, and hard labour.

This ordinance ran as follows :—

'His Royal Majesty's gracious ordinance against drunkenness, of the 24th August, 1813.

Paragraph 1.

'Whosoever shall overload himself with strong liquors, in such a way that it may plainly be perceived by his manners, and the disorderly state of his mind, that he is intoxicated, he shall be considered as guilty of the crime of drunkenness.

Paragraph 2.

'Whosoever in the above manner is found guilty of drunkenness, shall be fined, for the first time, 3 rix dollars, 16*s.* banco (equivalent to about 5 shillings of our money); the second time, 6 rix dollars, 32*s.*; the third time, 13 rix dollars, 16*s.*; and the fourth time likewise, 13 rix dollars, 16*s.*; besides which, he shall, in this last case, be sentenced to stand in the stocks on one Sunday, and be deemed incapable to vote at elections, or to be himself elected, to such situations as require public confidence; the delinquent shall undergo the punishment of the stocks in the parish where he resides, and a notification shall be made from the pulpit as to the nature of his crime. Should any person for the fifth time be found guilty of drunkenness, he shall be sent to any of the working institutions of the Crown, or a public spinning-house, and there be kept to hard labour for half a year; and if convicted the sixth

time or more, he shall for each time be punished with one year's labour, in the manner above stated.

'If any person be found overloaded with liquor in the presence of any officer holding the king's commission, or in any court of justice, at public meetings, public examinations, parish meetings, auctions, fairs, at the posting stations, or at the skalls (great public hunts after wild beasts), he shall be fined in double the amount of the above penalties; but the punishment of the stocks and public labour shall not be increased to more than above stated.

Paragraph 3.

'Should any one appear drunk at church, or where public worship is held, he shall he fined 16 rix dollars, 32*s.* banco, and undergo public church punishment.

Paragraph 4.

'Should any one, when drunk, or without being examined, take the holy sacrament after he shall have been warned by the clergyman, according to the church regulations, he shall be fined 33 rix dollars, 16*s.* banco, and suffer public church punishment.

Paragraph 5.

'Should any one so immoderately consume strong liquors as to cause his death, he shall be silently buried.'

Nothing can be more wholesome than the provisions of this act; and in no country is there a more signal example of disregard of rule than, in this particular, is manifested by the Swedish peasant.

Swearing is another vice, to use the mildest term, to which the Swedish peasant is greatly addicted. And his

oaths, moreover, are of a somewhat singular nature. His more usual expression is the name of His Satanic Majesty; but if the excitement be great, a whole legion of dark angels are invoked. For instance, a peasant who was one day with me in the forest broke through the ice and slightly wetted his feet; his first exclamation was 'the D—l;' presently the water took him half way up the leg, when it was 'one thousand D—ls;' at last, however, when he was immersed to the knees, it was 'ten thousand D—ls.' Occasionally I have heard 'one hundred thousand D—ls' called to a man's aid, and now and then 'a million.'

As with drunkenness, there are severe laws, very creditable to the government, against swearing, but it is to be feared that their efficacy in neither case has been great.

The following ordinance is referred to.

'Should a person break out in oaths and imprecations during divine service, he is to be fined 40 rix dollars or be imprisoned on bread and water. If he be guilty of the like offence in a court of justice, the fine is one half less.

'If, from audacity or inveterate habit, he swears in company, in a house, in the streets, or other public place, he is to be fined 5 rix dollars each time he is convicted of the offence. If it be not in a public place that he swears from passion or levity, the fine is 1 rix dollar; if for the third time, 5 rix dollars. The half of these fines go to the informer, and the other half to the poor.

'Should a minor swear, he shall be punished with the rod, either by the parents or his master, according to his age or the degeneracy of habits. If often repeated, he shall be put in the stocks at the church door. Should the

parents neglect to correct their children for swearing, they shall be fined 5 rix dollars.'

The stocks; however, are now abolished, and the law has been so modified of late years, that except in a court of justice the Swedish peasant may swear like a trooper with impunity.

When aged and infirm, and that they have no well-to-do relative to fall back on, the poor, in the rural districts at least, are supported by the parish in which they reside, not, however, in work-houses as with us in England, but at their own houses; or otherwise they are 'farmed out;' that is to say, they are boarded and lodged either by the parishioners in rotation, or by those who offer to take charge of them for a small remuneration, making up the difference to themselves by the work the paupers may be able to do on the homestead.

Only a very few years ago, a man was a sort of fixture in the parish where he was born and bred, but the laws are now so far altered, that after a six months' residence in another parish he obtains a settlement there. This is of immense advantage to the poor man, who, now that labour is in great measure free, can seek it in whatever part of the kingdom he has reason to believe it will be best paid for.

In conclusion, I have no hesitation in hazarding the opinion that the Swedish peasantry, more particularly in the north, are fully better off than the like class, if there be such, in our own country. As a rule, they appeared to me well clothed, well fed, well lodged, and almost universally to have plenty of firing. A similar impression seemed to be entertained by an intelligent Irish servant of

mine, who was often remarking their comfortable position as compared with that of his own countrymen. This he attributed—whether justly or not others must decide—to their having (I use his own words) 'no terrible rint-day to look forard to, like the poor craters in Ireland.'

SWEDISH LEGENDS.

THE following Legends are some of the more remarkable stories of giants and fairies which the Swedish peasants love to tell one another during the long winter evenings. They throw considerable light on their conceptions of the picturesque, the beautiful, and the terrible, and in some cases are worthy of preservation for their own sake.

I. THE SILVER BASKET.

THERE was once a king whose queen was a descendant of the Elves.* By her he had a daughter, who was more beautiful than other maidens, and, owing to her 'elvish' nature, so wise that she could before-hand see the result of disputed matters; wherefore her counsels were sought by both the rich and the poor; and to all who approached her

* From that race called '*Ljuflingar*,' because they '*ljuwade*,' or delighted mankind with their sweet songs and extreme beauty. They were white as snow, and were attired in such shining habiliments that it was almost impossible to distinguish them from the former. Before the introduction of Christianity into Sweden, and that the angels became known, the 'Ljuflingar' were the '*Skyddsandar*,' or protecting spirits, of the people (who at times, indeed, are said to have taken them to wife); and such individuals as they took under their special protection were sure to succeed in all their undertakings. Under their auspices, moreover, the herds throve and increased. These elves, who were at times called '*Huldra*,' by which designation I shall hereafter speak of them, often chanted to the lonely wanderer beautiful but melancholy songs, which were called 'Huldra melodies.'

she was kind and friendly. After the death of her parents she, from her wisdom and many virtues, was elected queen, and for a long time governed her people and the country well and judiciously. Happiness and prosperity were everywhere to be seen in her dominions.

One day the princess, attended by her maidens and courtiers, would enjoy the pleasures of the chase. When, however, she was in hot pursuit of a hind, she became separated from her followers, and lost in the intricacies of the forest. Whilst wandering she knew not where, a huge bear, to her terror, suddenly emerged from a thicket. Bending her bow, she lodged an arrow in its body; but as the wound proved not mortal, it only tended to increase its fury, and she, in consequence, was in imminent peril. At the instant, however, a shaft whirred through the air, and the beast fell lifeless to the ground.

A young hunter, simply clad, but of stately and handsome appearance, now stept forth from his place of concealment, and accosted her. He congratulated himself on his good fortune in having been near at hand, and thus enabled to save her life. The modest and courteous manner in which he conducted himself very greatly pleased the princess. She inquired his rank and occupation, and learnt from him that he was the son of a rich knight, but that through the machinations of a neighbour—a wealthy and powerful nobleman—he had been deprived of his possessions, and was now cultivating a small extent of ground in the vicinity. Afterwards she desired him to come to her palace in a few days, promising that the matter he complained of should be investigated, and full justice done him. Then, drawing a costly ring from her finger, and

bidding him a kindly farewell, she rode away in search of her attendants.

From that hour the youth dreamt of nothing but the beautiful princess, and when awake she was never absent from his thoughts.

At length the appointed day arrived when he was to see her again at the palace. Preparations were there made on a grand scale for his reception, and he was received with every mark of honour and distinction.

The first day the princess would not speak to him of his affairs, but showed him everything that was curious and remarkable in the palace. He especially admired two milk-white oxen and a white horse, the like of which he had never before seen.

The second day passed rapidly in agreeable conversation; and when he would speak to her of his return home, she said, 'that as yet she had not properly taken his grievance into consideration, but that on the following day she would counsel him how to act.'

Early every morning the youth went to the white horse, gave him oats, and patted his snow-white neck; and it seemed as if the animal fully understood his caressive words.

At length, on the third day, the princess told him 'she had now thought over his business, and that her advice to him was that he should quietly submit to the injustice that had been done to him.' This she said to put his virtue to the proof; adding, however, 'that she saw a brighter destiny awaiting him.'

On taking leave she presented him with the two snow-white oxen he had so much admired, saying, 'that with

them he could plough more ground in a single day than with others in three days.' And thus they parted, with great friendship on both sides.

Mankind are changeable, and grow weary even amidst pleasant circumstances. So it happened with the people of whom we are now speaking. There were two rich and powerful princes in the land. They had long sought to win the hand of the fair princess, and prevail on her to marry; but she replied, 'that for the sake of the peace and happiness of her subjects she would never take that step.'

The princes were wroth, and therefore purposely created discontent amongst the people, telling them 'how contemptible and mean it was for a powerful kingdom to be constantly ruled by a woman;' so that at length they rushed in a body to the palace, and insisted she should take a husband, leaving the choice to herself, and that they would acknowledge him as king. She was, therefore, necessitated to accede to their wishes, and fixed a day when the most considerable of her subjects, and deputies from foreign parts, should meet at her palace, when she would, she said, make her choice; but on whom that would fall she must take time to consider.

The princes, her suitors, were overjoyed at this decision. Each said, 'Who can she choose for a husband but myself?' The oldest of them announced himself forthwith, and the youngest immediately afterwards. But she spoke to them separately, so that the absent one knew not what had passed at the interview with the other, and said, 'She knew not the destiny the higher powers had in store either for herself or them; but that would be

made known on the appointed day.' She would not make them her enemies, although from the complaints that had reached her ears she well knew that her suitors treated their subjects with arrogance and injustice, and that the people more feared than loved them.

The day that was to decide the future fate of the princess at length arrived. The Privy-Councillors and all the people were assembled in the palace, when she stepped forward and thus addressed them:—'You have forced me to make the promise I am now about to fulfil; but I will leave to the higher powers, who, as you well know, direct in a wonderful manner the affairs of mankind, the decision of this matter.' Then, addressing herself to the Privy-Councillors, she said, 'Twelve of you will forthwith mount your steeds, and be in readiness to follow my white horse —on which no cavalier was ever yet mounted—wherever he goes. He well knows the course he shall take, and where he halts you will find a man eating his dinner on an iron table. On him shall you put the armour that I send with you, and afterwards gird his loins with this girdle.' She then drew forth an '*Elfbunden*' (one made by the elves) white silk girdle, adorned with pearls and precious stones, which possessed the virtue that the man girded therewith became imbued with superior wisdom and understanding, and had a more majestic appearance than other people.

The *White Horse** was accordingly turned loose,

* The heathen of the Gothic race had for this noble animal a holy reverence, believing it to be directed or guided by the unseen heavenly powers. In Christian times the white horse has also had great signification. In the book of Revelation, xix. 11, 14, 16, we read, 'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him

and with dilated nostrils and flowing mane and tail, dashed proudly along the road, and at so rapid a pace that the Privy-Councillors had great difficulty in keeping up with him. About midday, however, he diverged from the route he had previously followed, and made for a homestead at a little distance. In a field hard by sat a youth, eating his humble noontide meal from off a bright ploughshare, turned bottom upwards, and near him were two white oxen which the horse saluted with a loud and friendly neighing.

The emissaries now understood that the ploughshare was the 'iron table,' and dismounting they went up to the young man and tendered him the princess's compliments and commands. Forthwith he repaired to a neighbouring spring and made his ablutions, and afterwards allowed himself to be equipped in the magnificent panoply of which the Privy-Councillors were the bearers; and when they had girded his loins with the white silk girdle, he became aware of a strange change in his whole being. A wondrous light of wisdom was, as it seemed, kindled within him.

He then mounted the white horse (and that in so lordly a manner as to astonish the beholders), which, proud of its burden, started off homewards at speed, and stayed not its fiery course until arrived at the princess's palace, where all the people received him with acclamation, thinking they had never before seen so splendid a cavalier.

In a capacious '*Rikssal*,' or royal audience chamber,

was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.'

were assembled all the Privy-Councillors and people, and in front of them stood the two princes and the unknown knight. The doors opened, and the princess entered. She was more beautiful than ever from the blushes that overspread her countenance, caused as well at the sight of the young man whom in her heart she had long held dear, as at the thought of the change about to take place in her condition. On her arm she bore a little silver '*Korg*,' or basket, embellished with pearls, &c.; and thus she spoke to the people:—

'Before you stand three noble knights, who vie with each other for my hand, and one of whom I shall this day select for my husband and your king—not I myself, however, for in this weighty matter the higher powers must be consulted. Of the three, therefore, let him who, to your satisfaction, can show that heaven has bestowed on him higher intelligence than the other two in unravelling intricate matters and questions, be my choice.' Then, turning to her suitors, she said, 'Which of you, noble knights, has wisdom and understanding sufficient to solve the puzzle I am now about to propound to you?

'Here, in this "Korg," have I a present which I am desirous of distributing amongst you. The "Korg" contains a number of nuts which I have plucked in my grove. To the first of you I give the half of them and one over; to the second, the half of the remainder and one besides; and to the third, the half of those that are left and three in addition. As my basket will then be empty, I ask you how many it now contains?'

The first of the suitors replied, 'The riddle is very complicated, wise princess; nevertheless, I will make an

attempt to guess it. There must be sixty nuts in the basket.' The princess smiled and said, 'Thou hast failed in thy guess, noble knight. If there were in my "Korg" twice as many as at present, and in addition to them a half and a third and five besides, the number would as greatly exceed that thou hast named as it now is wanting of that.'

The second suitor long and thoughtfully eyed the little 'Korg,' and said at length, 'Five-and-forty are the nuts that it contains.' The princess answered for the second time, 'Thou hast not solved my enigma rightly. If a third, a half, and a sixth, were added to the nuts now in my little "Korg," so would there be as many exceeding forty-five as are now deficient.'

The third knight still remained, and all eyes were fixed on him. But his loins were girded with the 'Elf-bunden' girdle; and he spake thus:—'Profound is thy wisdom, O princess, and thy beauty wondrous and great. But thy riddle seems to me easy to guess. Thirty must be the number of nuts in thy beautiful "Korg."' Joyfully the princess turned towards him and said, 'Thou hast solved my enigma.' Afterwards she desired the first knight to hold out his casque, and counted into it half of the thirty nuts and one besides, and there were then fourteen remaining. The second knight in like manner held out his casque, and received the half of those that were left and one in addition, when there were six left. Of these the young knight received the half, as also the three that then remained in the 'Korg.'

The people rejoiced greatly at the result, and forth-

with proclaimed the unknown knight as their king; and the princess gave him her hand, and said, 'Ja,' or yes, that is, accepted him as her husband. But to the other two knights she gave the empty 'Korg,' the beautiful little 'Korg;' and hence, when a pretty girl has refused an offer of marriage, the saying, she has given such and such an one the 'Korg.'

And as the unsuccessful suitors on this occasion were supposed to have had somewhat 'hard nuts to crack,' this 'saw' has ever since been applied to people who have had difficult matters to solve.

II. THE COTTAGER'S SON.

Long, long ago there dwelt in the depths of the forest a poor peasant, who lived in great love and harmony with his young wife. Late one evening, when the wind was high, the cold intense, and the rain falling in torrents, an old hunchbacked beggar woman knocked at the cottage door, and asked for a night's lodging. But the servant girl replied, 'My mistress is ill, and already gone to bed, and no one can therefore be admitted.'

When, however, the wife heard the beggar woman knock for the second time, she said to her husband, 'A lone wanderer shall not be denied shelter in such weather as this; give her food and a warm bed.' The poor creature was then admitted, and afterwards well entertained in every way.

During the same night the peasant's wife was delivered of a fine child, which, to the great joy of both father and mother, proved to be a boy.

On the following morning, when the wife was alone in the house, the rest of the family being engaged out-of-doors in their several occupations, she no longer saw the decrepit old beggar woman, but, in her stead, an indescribably beautiful female, having a halo, as it were, around her head, bending with a mild and benevolent countenance over the cradle of her new-born baby, and giving utterance to words that the wife understood not, but which, to her ears, likened a sweet but scarcely audible song. At the same instant, however, people came into the cottage, when the elf—for it was now clear it was a '*Huldra*' — vanished, and the old beggar woman again sat by the fire and warmed herself.

Some little time afterwards, however, when she had partaken of food, she arose, thanked her kind hostess, and leaning on her 'wandering-staff,' limped slowly into the forest.

The young mother now clearly perceived that great good fortune was in store for her infant. She soon noticed, indeed, that it was more bright, and of a sweeter disposition, as also more intelligent and apt to learn, than other children of the like age.

What she had seen on the morning after its birth she communicated to no one, but often told her child 'how hospitality to the wayfarer, and kindness to the poor, were sure to carry with them a blessing.'

Time passed on until the cottager's son was big enough to pasture his father's cattle in the forest. All throve well that were under his charge; no animal ever strayed so far away that he was not able to recover it; and on no single occasion was the herd attacked by wild beasts.

Of long winter's evenings he listened with pleasure to his father's account of former battles, adventures, and heroic deeds; and the dark riddles and questions that, in accordance with the custom of the times, were then propounded to him, he solved and guessed so readily as in the highest degree to astonish his parents.

But when with his charge in the forest, the 'Sagas' he had heard from his father, and the ballads his mother had sung whilst at her spinning-wheel, sunk deep in his mind, and awakened a desire for a change in his mode of life; and when he appeared before his parents, and said, 'It is now time that I go forth into the wide world to seek my fortune,' they were not at all astonished, because they well knew the fates had ordained for him other occupation than that of tending cattle.

After that, to the best of their ability, they had provided him with clothes and provisions for the journey he was about to undertake, they took an affectionate leave of him, and wished him 'God speed.'

'During the first two days of the youth's wanderings he met with no adventure worthy of record, but on the third he came to a well in the forest, near to the brink of which sat a bear and a fox, with dry and parched tongues lolling out of their mouths, that were evidently perishing of thirst; and in a tree, overhanging the well, was perched a dove, which, to judge by its drooping head and ruffled feathers, was suffering from the like cause. None of these creatures could at this well obtain water, because it had sunk deep, owing to a great drought there had been during the summer.

'Poor things,' said the youth, 'you cannot reach

the water, and thirst is dreadful to bear. I will assist you.' And suiting the action to the word, he, with a bucket that stood by the side of the well, drew from it fresh water for all the three poor thirsty creatures, until such time as they were satisfied and greatly revived.

But when his labours were ended, and that he lifted up his eyes, lo! there stood before him a bright and beautiful female, who cast on him a look so mild and smiling that he could never forget it, and said to him, 'No one who shows kindness and compassion to poor dumb animals shall go unrequited. Drink now of the water that the bear has troubled, and from him shalt thou receive the reward of being able at pleasure to transform thyself into his likeness.' On this the bear looked up at him, mumbled something of a seemingly friendly and thankful nature, and went his way. For a second time she spoke to him, and bade him drink of the water the fox had agitated; and, as recompense, received from that animal the power of taking on himself its form whensoever it suited his good pleasure. The fox, by kindly gestures, thanked him, and then sprang into the forest. Afterwards, by her desire, he drank of the water disturbed by the dove; and, as a guerdon, received from the bird the privilege of assuming her shape and plumage at will. The dove fluttered in circles several times around his head, and then flew away.

When the youth looked about him for the beautiful female, she was no longer visible, but an old hunchbacked woman, leaning on her wandering-staff, was seen on the path. He then understood that it was the good '*Huldra*,' of whom his mother had so often spoken, and therefore went joyfully on his way.

After a while, however, the forest became thick and tangled, and difficult to traverse, and recollecting his beautiful dove, he therefore assumed her form, and thus guised flew over the mountain and valley, until towards even, when he found himself at the portals of the royal city of which he was in search, where he hoped to find such service as might eventually lead to making his fortune.

The dove alighted on the roof of a house, when it saw to its amazement that some fearful calamity had befallen the place, because all the people were in deep mourning, and seemed very down-hearted. It soon learnt, however, the cause of this great sorrow. A huge 'dragon,' terrible to look on, had, it appeared, taken up his abode on a neighbouring mountain, where he had a magnificent palace, but which no one ventured to go near. Whenever the beast was wroth he blew a stream of fire out of his jaws; and he threatened that this should cover the whole city on that very day the citizens neglected sending him, as a peace-offering, a maiden to feast on. By the drawing of lots, to the distress and dismay of their parents and relatives, forty young girls, in the like number of days, had been thus sacrificed; and now the lot had fallen on the king's only daughter, a young and beautiful princess, whom all the people held dear, by reason of her many great virtues and goodness.

In a carriage drawn by six black horses, followed by crowds of the weeping and lamenting citizens, the princess was now being conveyed out of the place. The beautiful dove flew round and about the vehicle (which was looked on by the people as a favourable sign from heaven), and by the side of it rode the old king drowned in tears; and

when they came to the gates of the dragon's palace, they all returned home again, and the princess only entered it.

The savage beast, happily, was then in an amiable mood, and led her into a magnificent apartment; and as she was very wearied, and required repose, he left her alone to rest over the night.

Sorrow kept her long awake; and whilst she sat at the closed casement, gazing on the fields, which looked so beautiful by moonlight, a little pretty dove came and perched on the sill of the window, which the princess opened, and the bird, to her great joy, flew into the room. At first she fancied it might be the dragon himself in disguise; but when the dove, observing her inquietude, transformed itself into a human being, a young man stood before her, and told her, in soothing words, that heaven had sent him to her rescue. 'I can well understand,' he said, 'that the dragon does not purpose drinking thy blood as he has done that of so many other maidens, but being enamoured of thy beauty, he will have thee as a companion in the palace.'

Afterwards he related to her what had happened at the well, and said, that by means of the rewards the poor creatures whom he had relieved from thirst had bestowed on him, he entertained sanguine hopes of saving both herself and the country. The youth's handsome appearance, and still more his consolatory speech, highly gratified the princess. Several hours passed in agreeable converse; but, for fear of the 'Troll's' return, they must at length separate, though this was not until the youth had promised to renew his visit on the following night; and a dove flew into the forest.

Towards morning the princess threw herself on a splendid couch, with silk hangings and golden supporters, and slept long and soundly. On awaking the sun was high in the heavens. Spread before her was a table, covered with gold and silver vessels, and the most costly and delicate viands, wine, and fruit; and as she was very hungry, and less afraid than on the preceding day, she seated herself at it, and partook of a plenteous repast.

But when the dragon came, and said she should be his queen, and that for her sake he would spare the city and the country, she thought of her dove, and consoled herself with the hope he had given her of deliverance from the terrible 'Troll.'

It was midnight, and the latter snored in a cavern, his usual sleeping-place in the rock. The princess sat at her window, and looked on the fair country beyond. She waited for her beautiful dove, and was greatly rejoiced when it flew into the room. On this evening there was more confidence between them, and the princess promised that if he succeeded in delivering her from the power of the dragon she would be true and faithful to him. It was agreed that she should endeavour by artifice to obtain from the beast the secret on which his life rested, and the means by which he could be deprived of it. Anticipations as to a happier future formed, however, the chief topic of conversation at this meeting. At dawn the youth took his leave, promising, as before, to return on the following night. Again a dove flew from the princess's window into the forest.

When the dragon entered the maiden's chamber on the second day she made pretence to be dreadfully dis-

tressed; and when he inquired the cause of her trouble, she said it was owing to a dream she had had during the preceding night, and which was of so dreadful a nature that she could never forget it. 'I dreamt,' she replied, 'that a young knight came to the palace and killed thee.' 'Such like dreams must never cause thee disquiet,' rejoined the beast. 'My life rests on that of a giant, a brother of mine, on the Dovrefjäll. In his head sits a dove, and in the head of the bird a pebble; and he alone who can overcome the powerful giant, and afterwards capture the dove, and thus obtain possession of the pebble, can take my life, and that is impossible; we must live until our appointed day.'

All this the princess neglected not to communicate to her dove when it came to the palace on the third night. This passed even quicker and more lovingly than the two preceding ones; and at the first appearance of day the bird flew away, vowing it would not return until it had vanquished the redoubtable ogre in question, and had the pebble, that was to prove the bane of the dragon, in his possession.

Many were the adventures that our youth met with whilst in search of the giant of the Dovrefjäll; but it may suffice to state that some little time after his last visit to the princess two huge and fierce bears were one fine day seen on that mountain in fearful combat with each other. Neither of them, however, could claim the victory, and towards evening both sank to the ground, overcome with weariness.

On the following day two foxes fought on the same battle-field, and though many were the devices to which

the cunning creatures resorted, neither could obtain the mastery.

The combatants on the third day were two doves, which contended in the air, until from exhaustion they fell together on the sward. In the twinkling of an eye, however, one of them was transformed into a fox, when seizing its antagonist in its jaws, it sprang with it down the mountain-side.

The pebble spoken of was found by the youth in the dove's head; and after encountering many perils, and having had several hair-breadth escapes, he carried it with him to the dragon's palace.

The beautiful princess, alternately hoping and fearing, had passed many sleepless nights since the departure of her champion. It may, therefore, be readily conceived with what delight she one night heard a slight pecking at her window, and on opening it the youth stood before her.

There was no time to be lost. The snoring of the beast made it evident that he was still sleeping profoundly. Boldly, therefore, the valorous youth entered the cavern, where he was confronted by the dragon, who, now aroused, rushed furiously forth to meet the enemy. But the youth hurled the pebble with such force as to sink deep in the brow of the fearful 'Troll,' who, shaking himself so that the whole mountain trembled, sunk lifeless to the ground in the cave, where it is indeed said his body still remains.

The happy princess now placed a costly ring on the finger of her champion; and after that he had donned a sumptuous suit of armour, of which there were many in the dragon's palace, they proceeded together, hand in hand, to the city, where the king—who was accompanied by all

the people—learnt with joy and astonishment the way in which his daughter had been freed from the power of the beast.

As a reward to her deliverer, the sovereign gave him the princess to wife; and the wedding, which lasted for several days, was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony.

On the third day after the nuptials the bridegroom was informed that an old and decrepit woman stood at the palace gates, who was desirous of speaking with him. He went out to her immediately, and was rejoiced on seeing the beautiful elf standing before him. 'Thou hast stood the proof,' she said, 'and I have fulfilled the promise I gave when by the side of thy cradle. Hereafter shalt thou, when a king, be like the bear, strong and an over-match for thine enemies; like the fox, wise and cautious in thy counsels, so that cunning and flattery shall not deceive thee; and like the dove, mild and gentle, so shalt thou win the love of the people who are fortunate enough to have thee to rule over them; and now, farewell.'

Shortly afterwards an old hunchbacked beggar woman, leaning on her wandering-staff, was seen departing from the royal palace.

III. THE 'HULDRA,' OR PITY REWARDED.

Once in a time there dwelt in the depths of the forest a poor cottager and his wife and their only son. At the birth of the latter there came an old wandering woman at eventide to the hut, and begged shelter for the night. She had a long staff in her hand, was bent nearly double,

shivered, and seemed to stand in great need of warmth and refreshment. Her request was at once granted; she was kindly welcomed, and supplied with the best the house afforded.

When she arose at early morn, her kind entertainer thought her an altogether altered person from the preceding evening. She rocked the cradle of the newly-born babe, and mildness and benignity were depicted in her countenance. After wishing the child health and happiness, and thanking her hospitable hosts, she with a light and agile step pursued her journey. They now clearly perceived she was a '*Huldra.*'

The poor cottager's wife was soon afterwards a widow. But the boy grew up, and at an early age became remarkable for his manliness and good sense. It happened one day, when he was tending his mother's goats in the forest, that he met the good elf-woman, who thus addressed him:—'The time is now arrived for thee to seek thy fortune in the world; but thy occupation will be widely different from herding cattle.' 'If it be as thou sayest,' rejoined the youth, 'my stay in my mother's hut won't, probably, be long. Tell me, therefore, I pray thee, what will be my future lot in life?' 'Meet me at this spot next Holy Thursday,' said the 'Huldra,' 'and I will then comply with thy wishes, and reward thy parents for their readiness to feed and nourish a poor wandering woman, though at the time in great need themselves.' The youth eyed her attentively, and noticed that her face was fairer and her looks more mild and friendly than those of other women, and he therefore thought reliance might be placed on her word. They then parted, and he and his goats

wended their way homeward; but that evening he was silent, and spoke but little.

The following morning his mother, having remarked a change in his temper and conduct, questioned him as to the cause, on which he told her what had occurred in the forest on the preceding day. This brought to her recollection the 'Huldra's' visit, and her promise, when thanking them for food and shelter, that good fortune should follow him through life. She bethought herself, moreover, how from early childhood his appearance, words, and behaviour had differed from that of other children.

On the appointed day, therefore, she said to her son, 'Thou shalt now go to the place agreed on, and I do not soon expect to see thee home again, because the stranger will reward thee for the friendly reception she met with at our hut. I counsel thee never to turn away from the poor and needy, or from any one it may be in thy power to aid; for good deeds are often visited on children and children's children.' Thus parted mother and son, the latter to seek his fortune in the wide world.

At the spot she had named, the youth met his 'Huldra,' who, desiring him to follow her, led the way deeper and deeper into the forest. As he noticed, however, that they were pursuing a little ant-path, he kept as much on one side of it as possible, so as not to trample on the insects. The 'Huldra' saw this, and turning about, smiled, but at the time said nothing.

At length they came to a fountain, where they halted. The youth here observed a little ant that had fallen into the water, and was struggling for life. The sufferings of the poor creature brought to his remembrance the advice

given him by his mother, and with a leaf he therefore lifted it out of the water and placed it gently on the bank. On noticing this second act of benevolence his companion said, 'When I saw thee step aside from the path to avoid treading on the ants, it was clear to me thou wast intended for a king; and as a reward for saving the life of a helpless insect, I confer on thee the gift of transforming thyself, when it suits thy purpose, into an ant. But,' she went on to say, 'thou shalt now drink from this spring wherein the blood of holy men has mingled; afterwards thy arm shall never fail thee in combat, whether with mortal or "Troll" (evil spirits).' The 'Huldra' then presented the youth with a cup of the precious fluid, of which he quaffed three several times, when, pointing out to him the path he was to follow, they separated.

The limpid draught he had just imbibed had, as it seemed to him, an extraordinary effect on both his mind and body. Many strange and unaccountable thoughts entered his head; but for the most part he dwelt on what the 'Huldra' had foretold as to his future great fortunes.

For many days he wandered. At length he came to another kingdom, when, addressing the first person he met, he inquired 'if there was any news in the country?' 'The only news is old,' replied the stranger; 'the king has long been mentally afflicted, which renders him at all times miserable and unhappy, and for which no cure can be found.' The youth further inquired 'if it was easy to obtain an interview with the monarch?' 'No,' said the stranger; 'because a crafty nobleman, who hopes to succeed to the throne, prevents all access to the "presence."'

Nothing daunted, the youth proceeded straightway to

the royal palace; but, as was to be expected from what he had just heard, was refused admittance, the magnate in question keeping strict guard at the door of his Majesty's apartment.

In the evening, however, a little ant, unseen by every one, crept up the palace stairs and through the keyhole of the door of the room wherein the king sat. A young man now suddenly appeared before the sovereign, made his obeisance, and respectfully inquired the cause of his sorrow. 'For it is possible,' he went on to say, after a pause, 'I may know a cure for a mind diseased.' The king, in silence, regarded the intruder for a while, but at length spoke thus:—'I may well be sorrowful; my beautiful "spring" is dried up; my fairest "tree" no longer bears fruit; and my only daughter has been carried away by a giant to the mountains beyond the "great flood."' 'What reward dost thou promise him, O king, who can counsel thee in this matter, and rescue the young princess?' 'My daughter to wife, and my dominions in addition,' replied the king; and having so said, his head dropped on his breast, and he appeared as one inanimate.

A little ant again crept through the keyhole and down the stairs, unobserved by the guard; and presently afterward a young man was seen on the high road, inquiring his way to the 'great flood.' It was the son of the poor widow in the forest.

On the third day of his wanderings he reached the desired river, near to the banks of which an old man, with a bushy and snow-white beard, sat disconsolately on the stump of a withered tree. It was the ferryman. The youth requested to be conveyed across the stream to the mountain

on the other side. 'Many,' said the patriarch, 'have I ferried over, but no one has ever returned.' 'How long hast thou been here?' inquired the traveller; 'thou seemest to me very, very aged.' 'For three hundred years,' replied the ferryman; 'but my sin was deserving of still greater punishment than to row this boat.' 'Have thy deeds been so evil, then,' asked the wayfarer, 'that thou canst never obtain forgiveness?' 'Never, never!' exclaimed the old man. 'I have cursed father and mother; and rather shall this withered stump on which I am seated throw out leaves than I obtain deliverance.' They then embarked, the ferryman plying the oars in silence, and after a time he landed his passenger on the opposite shore.

Soon a little ant crept up the mountain-side through crevices and clefts of the rock, until it reached the giant's great hall. The ogre was not at home, but the most beautiful princess in the world sat in the apartment. On seeing the youth, who had then resumed his proper form, she rejoiced greatly: and when he had confided to her his errand, she hid him carefully, so that the giant on his return might not find and kill him.

But he was hardly concealed and that she had resumed her embroidery, which during their interview she had cast aside, when the ogre, beside himself with rage, entered the hall, exclaiming in a voice of thunder, 'I smell Christian blood.' 'A raven has just flown over the mountain with a man's thigh in his claws,' replied the princess, 'and these drops of gore fell here.' The giant was satisfied, and being tired and drowsy after his journey, laid himself down on a couch, and desired the maiden to 'louse' him.

Seating herself by his side, as ordered, her taper fingers were presently occupied in searching for 'hidden treasure.' But presently the princess started up, as if suddenly overcome with sleep, and in so doing twitched a few hairs from out of the head of the ogre. This awoke him, when he inquired what had happened. 'Oh, I slept,' said she, 'and dreamt so curiously.' 'What about?' he asked. 'I thought,' replied the maiden, 'I was in my father's palace, and the "clear spring" was dried up, and no one could find another font.' 'When thy parent erected the church there,' rejoined the giant, 'I cast a *Häll-sten* (large flat stone) over the mouth of the well, which sunk deep down and dried up its sources.'*

Again the monster slept, but presently was awakened by the loss of another lock of hair, for which mischance the princess made the same excuse as before. 'What hast thou dreamt about this time?' inquired he, somewhat petulantly. 'I dreamt,' said she, 'that I was in my father's palace, and that he sorrowed over his fair "tree," which no longer bears him fruit.' 'That was owing to thy father's wicked counsellor,' observed the giant, 'who

* The giants, and others of the 'Troll,' according to popular belief, entertained the most inveterate hatred to the Christian religion; and when churches were first erected in Sweden, made regular war on them. One not unfrequently sees huge and isolated boulders lying on the ground in the more open parts of the country, which by the common people are called '*Jätte Kastar*,' that is, stones hurled by the giants from their mountain fastnesses at one or other of the churches in their vicinity. These boulders are oftentimes distant from any of the sacred buildings; and 'should one ask a peasant how this happens?' says Parson Afselius, 'he will probably tell you, that the arm of the ogre who threw this missile was so strong that it flew beyond the church, or that the latter was so far away that the stone fell short of the mark.' Singularly enough, there are said to be deep impressions on some of the 'Jätte Kastar,' as if of enormous fingers, caused, it is further believed, by the giants' hands when throwing them at God's house.

one night caused thy youngest brother to be murdered and buried beneath the tree, giving out that whilst engaged in the chase he had been killed by wild beasts; and now the wicked man alone rules the kingdom and oppresses the people. If that sin be revenged, and the body of the murdered child exhumed, the tree will again be fruitful.'

Once more the ogre composed himself to sleep, but was presently aroused by a third twitch. 'What canst thou have been dreaming about this time,' asked he, much angered, 'thus to disturb my slumbers?' 'Oh! I dreamt,' replied the maiden, 'that the old ferryman at the "great flood" asked me if his sins could never be forgiven.' 'Near to that sword on the wall,' rejoined the giant, 'hangs a flask of "living water;" if the withered stump near his hut be therewith sprinkled he may obtain deliverance.'

For the fourth time the ogre fell asleep, but presently the princess uttered a loud shriek, which caused him to start up from his couch. 'What can now be the matter?' wrathfully exclaimed the monster, 'or hast thou dreamt again?' 'I dreamt,' replied the princess, 'that a man entered the mountain and murdered thee, and I much fear the dream will prove true.' 'Don't be alarmed,' the giant responded. 'He who will wield my sword, and it is with that weapon alone I can be slain, must first drink of that spring in which the blood of holy men has mingled. But I can no longer be troubled with thy dreams,' he went on to say; 'lay thyself down, therefore, to rest.'

With these words he again composed himself on his pallet, and soon fell into a profound sleep, and snored so loudly, that the whole mountain shook again.

The youth, who, from his place of concealment, had

heard all that had passed, now came forth and took down from the wall the giant's sword—which he found, on trial, he could readily wield,—when, creeping stealthily up to the monster's couch, he at a single blow severed his head from his body!

The young princess was dreadfully alarmed at seeing the ogre's corpse weltering in gore! She nevertheless thanked all the saints for her deliverance, as also the young hero, for whom she felt no little admiration, and to whom she vowed to herself to pledge her troth. The youth now girded the giant's sword, with its golden belt, to his side; and after they had together drank some wine, and otherwise refreshed themselves, they ransacked the monster's treasures, consisting of precious stones, gold, pearls, &c. Selecting the most valuable of these, they hid the remainder for a more convenient opportunity. They then left the palace, and were greatly rejoiced when once more in the open air; and whilst conferring together as to what was next to be done, became very loving towards each other.

When they had crossed the 'great flood,' to the ferryman's, they neglected not to pour of the 'living water' from the giant's flask on to the withered stump, which immediately became clothed with tender shoots and leaves. Whilst they were thus occupied the old man came forth from his hut, and rejoiced greatly at seeing the wanderer, whom he had so recently rowed over the stream, and whom he had given up for lost, returned in safety. The youth now took him by the hand, and pointing to the old stump, said, 'Seest thou how it flourishes? Canst thou not believe in the Saviour?' The old ferryman, in admiration, clasped together his shrivelled hands, and

lifted up his eyes to heaven in thanksgiving. His deliverance was at hand. He fell to ashes, as if dead for two hundred years; and the young pair shed tears of joy that he had at length entered on his rest.

It was late in the evening when the youth and the maiden reached the royal palace. The princess awoke an old servant, by whom they were most kindly and hospitably entertained. Their arrival diffused universal joy, and messengers were forthwith despatched to the most faithful of the king's adherents. When they had assembled, and had taken counsel together, it was determined that before dawn on the following day the flat stone that dammed up the beautiful fountain should be removed, the body of the murdered prince exhumed from beneath the fair tree, and the crafty nobleman cast into prison.

In the morning, when hardly light, a servant stood before the king with a goblet filled with water, and said, 'The clear spring, O king, runs once more, and is now full to overflowing; and the fair tree bears fruit as aforetime.' His Majesty, both astonished and delighted, would himself witness the miracle; and on proceeding to the spot found everything in the state the man had reported. But the greatest of happiness was in store. His lost daughter stepped forth, and fell on her knees before him; the youth also arrived, and said, 'Behold now, O king, the clear fountain flows, the good tree bears fruit, and thy only daughter is found. What reward givest thou me?' 'That which I promised,' replied the monarch, 'that shalt thou have.'

There were now great rejoicings throughout the palace. The wedding was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony, and the festivities lasted for many days.

In the mean while the poor widow remained in the forest with her goats, which one after the other were killed for food, until at length she had nothing to live on. One day, however, a great noise was heard in the wood, and presently a splendid gilt chariot drove up to the hut, from which alighted a richly-dressed knight and lady. They walked into the building, and the poor widow was much perplexed as to who and what were her guests, and the cause of the unexpected visit. At length the youth asked her 'if she did not know her own son again?' At first the old lady had her doubts; but presently, recognizing her own flesh and blood, she rushed wildly into his arms.

When their first emotions had subsided, the widow seated herself by the side of the queen (the princess having ascended her late father's throne) in the golden chariot, and thus they proceeded to the royal palace, where the old woman lived in peace and happiness to the day of her death.

The young king, who in childhood would not trample on an ant, and who when he came to power would not suffer the slightest violence or injustice within his dominions, was greatly beloved by the people, and became renowned over the whole world; and the young queen never repented that she gave her hand to the son of the poor widow woman in the forest.

IV. THE GIFTS OF THE ELF-KING.

THERE was once a poor herd-boy. Excepting a step-mother, he had no one in the world to look up to for help and protection. She, however, was a wicked woman, and

grudged him both food and raiment, and he consequently endured much hardship. The whole of God's long day he tended the cattle in the forest, and for his pains got nothing but a bit of dry bread morning and evening.

One fine day the old woman went from home without leaving him any food, and he was therefore obliged to set off, fasting, to the forest. He was very, very hungry, and cried bitterly. But a little before noon he dried his tears, and ascended a green and wooded knoll, where he was accustomed to repose during the heats of summer; for here, under the shade of the overhanging trees, it was always cool, and the grass moist with dew. But now the latter was gone, the ground dry, and the grass trampled on. All this appeared very strange to him, and he wondered greatly as to the cause. Whilst pondering over the matter, however, he saw something glistening in the sun, and on running up to it found a pair of small, small shoes of the finest crystal. Greatly delighted, he forgot his hunger, and for the rest of the day amused himself by playing with his prize.

In the evening, at sundown, the herd-boy collected the cattle and drove them homeward. When he had gone some distance he met a little, little fellow, who in a friendly manner bid him 'Good evening.' 'Good evening,' in return, replied he. The little stranger then inquired, 'Hast thou found my shoes which I lost this morning in the green grass?' 'Yes,' said the herd-boy; 'but pray let me keep them, for when I get home I shall give them to my stepmother, and then perhaps she will let me have a good supper.' 'Oh, do return them to me,' rejoined the little

fellow in the most winning way, 'and another time I will do thee a good turn.' To the great joy of the diminutive stranger, the boy then gave him back the small crystal shoes; on which he nodded a kindly adieu, and went his way.

When the herd-boy got home it was already dark, and his stepmother cursed him for being so late. 'There is porridge in the pot,' said the hag; 'eat, and be off to bed, so that thou mayest be up early in the morning, like other people.' The poor boy durst not reply to these hard words; he therefore finished his meal quickly, and then slunk off to the hayloft where he slept; but all night long he dreamt of nothing but the little stranger and his small crystal shoes.

Early in the morning, before the sun appeared in the east, the boy was awakened by his stepmother, who cried out, 'Up with thee, sluggard; it is broad daylight, and the cattle must not famish for thy sake.' He jumped up immediately, got a bit of bread for breakfast, and led his charge to pasture. On repairing to his favourite green knoll he thought it very odd that the dew should be already gone, and the ground even drier than on the preceding day. Whilst thinking how this could be he caught sight of something in the green grass that glittered in the sun. He ran up to it, and found a little, little red hat, to which were appended a number of small gilt bells. He was rejoiced at his good fortune, and for the remainder of the day amused himself with his booty.

In the evening, when the last rays of the sun gilded the tree-tops, the herd-boy set off homewards. On the way

he met a very little and very pretty maiden. She greeted him kindly: 'Good evening.' 'The same to thee,' said he in return. The little girl then inquired, 'Hast thou found my hat which I lost this morning in the green grass?' 'Yes,' he replied; 'but please let me keep it, my dear, as I wish to give it to my stingy old stepmother, who then, perchance, will let me have plenty to eat to-night.' But she begged for her hat so perseveringly, promising at the same time to serve him in return, that he at length restored it to her. On getting it back the little maiden was overjoyed, and clapping her hands together, exclaimed, 'I am so glad, so very glad.' Then taking a friendly farewell of him, she gaily tripped away.

When the herd-boy reached home with his charge it was already dark, and his stepmother, who had long awaited his return, was in a towering passion. 'Thou art always so late,' cried she, 'that I am obliged to sit up half the night milking. There is porridge in the pot; eat, and be off to bed, so that thou mayest rise betimes in the morning, like other folk.' The poor boy dared not answer her; but after hastily swallowing his scanty meal, again betook himself to the hayloft. All night long, however, he dreamt of nothing but the little maiden and her little red hat.

Before daybreak in the morning he was roused by his stepmother with the usual salutation. 'Turn out, thou sluggard; the cattle are not to fast on thy account.' The poor fellow at once arose from his couch, and made ready to lead his charge to the forest; but before starting he asked the old woman for 'a morsel of bread.' 'Bread,' replied the virago; 'a useless brute like thee is not worth

his bread.' He was therefore necessitated to leave home with an empty stomach, which he thought 'very, very hard indeed.'

When he had entered the wood, and had seated himself on his cherished green knoll, he noticed that the grass was even more trampled than on the previous days, and that, moreover, in large circles. This brought to his mind what he had heard of the little elves holding their dances during summer nights on the dewy grass; and he therefore concluded this must be an 'elf-ring.' As he sat thinking over the matter, he struck his foot against a little '*Pingla*' (a sort of bell), that was lying in the grass, which caused it to ring so sweetly that the cattle gathered about him and stood to listen. He rejoiced at his good luck, and played with the 'Pingla' until all his own troubles were forgotten, and the cows no longer remembered the pasture. The day, therefore, flew swiftly by, —much quicker, indeed, than he could have thought possible.

Towards evening, when the last rays of the sun were only just perceivable on the tops of the trees, the herd-boy prepared to return to the hamlet; but all his endeavours to draw the cattle away from the spot, which abounded in very rich grass, proved fruitless. 'Perhaps,' thought he to himself, 'they will pay more heed to the little "Pingla" than to my voice.' Drawing it forth, therefore, he, whilst bending his steps homeward, commenced ringing it, on which the 'bell-cow,' followed by the rest of the herd, immediately came galloping up to him. The boy rejoiced greatly, being well aware how serviceable the little 'Pingla' might hereafter prove to him.

As he was pursuing his way through the forest with his charge he met a little, little old man, who kindly bid him 'Good evening.' 'The like to thee,' said the herd-boy. 'Hast thou found the little "Pingla" that I lost this morning in the green grass?' inquired the stranger. 'I have it here,' replied the lad. 'Then give it me back again,' said the little old man. 'Not a bit of it,' responded the boy; 'I'm not so stupid as thou thinkest. The day before yesterday I found a pair of crystal shoes; a little fellow persuaded me out of them; and yesterday I picked up a hat, and that I gave to a little maiden; and now thou art desirous of obtaining from me this "Pingla," which is so useful to lure the cattle. Other people are rewarded for what they find, but I never receive anything.' The little old man urged all he could, but was unable to carry his point. At length he said, 'If thou wilt restore me my "Pingla" thou shalt have another just as good; and thou shalt have three "wishes" besides.' The herd-boy, who was now aware that it was the 'elf-king' with whom he was conversing, thought this not a bad bargain, and closed with it at once.

'Firstly,' said he, 'I wish to be a king; secondly, to have a fine palace; and thirdly, to win a beautiful, beautiful queen.' 'These are not small "wishes,"' remarked the little old man; 'but remember well what I am now about to say to thee. To-night, whilst all are asleep, thou must leave thy home, and proceed due north until thou comest to a royal palace. Here is a little horn; if thou art in need sound it once; if in great need, twice; but if in extreme peril, break it in pieces, and I will come to thy assistance.' The boy heartily thanked the elf-king for his

present, on which the little old man went his way; and whilst hugging himself with the thought 'that for good and all he should now have done with his old stepmother,' he bent his steps homewards.

As it was late when he reached the house, the old woman, who had long expected his coming, was in a horrible temper, and instead of supper, gave the poor fellow nothing but 'thumps.' But whilst creeping into the hay-loft he consoled himself with the reflection, 'this won't last so very long.'

Throwing himself on his pallet, he slept for a short time; but long before cock-crow he arose, left the house stealthily, and, agreeably to the little old man's instructions, bent his steps in a northerly direction. He wandered without rest or sleep, over mountains and valleys, and two suns rose and two suns set whilst he was still on his weary, weary journey.

On the third day, towards evening, he came to a palace so large and splendid, that he had never even imagined its like. He went in and offered himself as servant. 'What canst thou do?' inquired the stewards. 'Why, tend cattle,' replied he. 'The king is just now in great want of a "herd,"' the man went on to say; 'but I suppose it will be with thee as with others, that every day thou wilt lose some of thy charge.' 'I never yet lost a single beast,' responded the boy. He was now engaged at the great palace to look after the king's cattle; and as the wolves, now that the latter were under his care, never caused ravages amongst them, he grew into great favour with the royal servants.

One evening, whilst returning with his charge from the

forest, he observed a lonely little maiden at an upper window of the palace, listening attentively to his song; and although her beauty caused his heart to palpitate, he pretended not to be aware of her presence. Matters went on thus for a while, and the boy rejoiced greatly every time he saw her; but he was not yet aware that she was the king's daughter. One day, however, whilst he was pasturing his cattle, she brought a snow-white lamb, and requested him, in the gentlest manner, 'to guard it from the wolves.' He was so fluttered that he could not even stammer out a reply to her kind greeting. But he took the lamb under his care, and the greatest of his pleasures was to tend and nourish it. The little creature soon became much attached to her protector, and followed him about like a dog.

From that time forward the herd-boy often saw the beautiful princess. In the morning, as he was on his way with the cattle to the forest, when the maiden would stand at the casement listening to his song; and in the evening, on his return from thence, when she would descend from her bower to caress her little lamb, and to exchange a few friendly words with its kind keeper.

In process of time the herd-boy grew up to be a fine and stalwart young man, and the princess the most beautiful maiden far or near. Agreeably to her custom, nevertheless, she came every evening to caress her little petted favourite.

One fine day, however, the king's daughter suddenly disappeared, and was nowhere to be found. As every one loved her there was great grief and consternation over the kingdom; but the king and the queen sorrowed the most.

His Majesty issued a proclamation throughout the land, that whoever restored the princess should receive her hand in marriage, together with the half of his kingdom.

Then came kings' sons, and knights, and champions from the east and from the west. They clad themselves in iron, and with their retainers went in search of the lost maiden. Few, however, returned, and those who were so fortunate, brought no tidings of the lost one. The grief of the king and queen was excessive, they having no longer hopes of ever seeing her again. The poor herd-man, nevertheless, was compelled to follow his cattle as usual to the forest; but he had a sorrowful time of it. His thoughts were no longer his own, but night and day dwelt on his beautiful and now lost princess.

One night in his sleep he saw, as he imagined, the elf-king standing by his bed-side, and saying, 'Northwards! northwards! There shalt thou find thy queen!' This so rejoiced the youth that he started up, when, lo and behold! there really stood the little old man, still crying, 'Northwards! northwards!' and pointing, in the while, in that direction. Immediately afterwards, however, he vanished, leaving the herd-man in doubt whether or no he had seen an apparition.

When it was daylight the youth went up to the palace, and requested leave to speak with the king. This caused some surprise amongst the royal servants. The steward said, 'Thou, who hast been herd-man for so many years, may obtain an increase of wages without troubling his Majesty.' But he persisted in his requests, and gave them all to understand he had a very different object in view. At length, however, he was ushered into the 'presence,'

when the king demanded his errand. He then said, 'I have faithfully served thee for a long time. I now pray leave of absence, that I may go in quest of the princess, thy daughter.' The king on hearing this was wroth, and replied, 'How is a poor herd-man like thee to undertake an adventure that kings' sons and champions have failed to accomplish?' But the youth answered boldly, 'I will either deliver the princess or lose my life.' The king was pleased with his words and bearing, and remembering the old proverb, 'A stout heart is often found under a wadmal jacket,' his anger vanished, and he gave consent. He, moreover, issued immediate orders that the herd-man should be supplied with a horse, and every necessary. But the youth said, 'It will not be in character for one like me to ride. All that I require is thy royal license and provisions for the journey.' His Majesty then wished him a happy issue to his daring enterprise; but all the royal pages, and other servants of the palace, smiled derisively at the notion of his undertaking so perilous an adventure.

In accordance with the elf-king's directions, the youth journeyed 'northwards,' and so long did he travel that it could not have been far from the world's end. Wandering thus over mountain and desert, he at length came to a great lake, in the midst of which was a beautiful island, where stood a palace more splendid than even the one he had left behind. He proceeded to the strand, and whilst gazing at the gorgeous structure before him, remarked at an upper window a maiden with beautiful golden hair, waving towards him a ribbon similar to that worn by the princess's lamb. His heart leaped with joy at the sight,

for he felt sure she could be no other than the king's lost daughter.

He sat down to consider how he should cross the lake, but could devise no expedient. At length he bethought himself of trying whether the elves would help him. He therefore drew forth the little horn given him years before by the 'elf-king,' and blew a long-drawn blast. 'Good evening,' said a voice from behind. 'Good evening,' replied the youth, as he faced about. To his astonishment the little fellow, whose crystal shoes he had found in the green grass, stood before him. 'What wilt thou with me?' inquired the elf. 'I pray thee convey me over the lake,' replied the herd-man. 'Mount on my back, then,' was his rejoinder. The youth did so; but at the same instant the elf was transformed into a great, great falcon, which winged its way through the air, and alighted not until they reached the beautiful island.

The youth went up to the palace, and asked for service. 'What canst thou do?' inquired the steward. 'Tend cattle,' said he. 'The giant is just now in very great need of a herd,' said the man, 'but it will be with thee as with others; for if thou lose any of thy charge, thy life will pay the forfeit.' 'That seems to me a very hard condition,' rejoined the youth, 'but still I agree to it.' He was then engaged, and told he might enter on his duties the following day.

He now led the giant's cattle to the pasture, and trolled his song, and rung his little 'Pingla,' as was his wont. The king's daughter sat at the window and listened, but made signs to him not to let it appear they were known to each other. In the evening, as he was re-

turning from the forest, he met the giant himself, who seized hold of him, and exclaimed, 'Thy head shall answer for the lost beast.' But on counting the cattle (let the ogre reckon as he might), none were missing. This so pleased the giant that he said, 'Thou shalt be my herdman as long as I live.' Proceeding afterwards to the seashore, the ogre cast off his shallop, and, as was his custom, rowed three times round the island.

During her jailer's absence from the palace the maiden sat at the casement and sung:—

'This night, this night, my shepherd,
My star will be in the ascendant;
Come then, and I will be thine,
And will freely bestow on thee my crown.'

The youth listened attentively to the song, from which he inferred that in the evening he was to attempt the rescue of the princess. Without appearing to notice her, he therefore went his way. But when it was late, and every one buried in deep sleep, he crept under the window of her tower, and sung:—

'This night thy shepherd expects thee.
He now stands sorrowing under thy grated window.
If thou wilt come down, mine thou shalt be.
The shadows are already lengthening.'

The princess whispered, 'I am bound with golden chains. Come and break them.' The youth, seeing no other way of aiding her, drew forth his little horn, and this time blew a double blast. 'Good evening,' said a voice at his elbow. 'Good evening, in return,' replied he. And turning about, the little elf-king, who had presented him with both the horn and the 'Pingla,' stood before him. 'What dost thou want with me?' inquired he. 'I beg

that thou wilt convey the princess and myself from hence,' rejoined the youth. 'Follow me,' said the elf-king. They then ascended the tower to the maiden's prison, the door of which opened of itself. And when the little old man touched her fetters they fell from off her. All then proceeded in company to the sea-shore.

The elf-king then sung :—

'Little pike, through the rushes thou must go.
Come, come, so hastily.
A princess shall ride on thy back,
Also a king so mightily.'

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when the little maiden, whose hat the herdsman had found in the green grass, made her appearance. She sprang into the lake, and was forthwith transformed into an enormous pike, which sported joyously on the surface of the water. 'Get upon its back,' said the elf-king, addressing himself to both of them; 'but happen what may, the princess must not show any signs of fear, as if so my power will be at an end.' The little old man then vanished. The youth and the beautiful princess did as they were desired, when the fish gallantly ploughed its way through the billows.

Whilst all this was going on the giant, who was sleeping in an upper apartment of the palace, awoke, and on looking out of his window, saw the herdsman and the young princess upon the water. Instantly he drew on his *Orneham*, that is, assumed the form and plumage of an eagle, and flew after them. But when the pike heard the rush of the bird's wings it dived into the deeps, which so alarmed the king's daughter, that she cried out aloud, on which the power of the elf-king ceased. The giant

now seized both the fugitives in his talons, and on reaching his palace, cast the herd-man into a dark hole fully 15 fathoms under-ground, and led the princess back to her former prison, where she was very strictly guarded, that she might not again escape.

Whilst thus lying immured in his loathsome den, the youth's grief was embittered by the thought that 'although he had sacrificed his own life, he had not been able to deliver the princess.' In his distress the elf-king's words, 'If for the third time thou art in imminent peril, break asunder the little horn, and I will help thee,' suddenly flashed across his mind; and as the herd-man felt assured that without his aid he should never again see the light of day, he drew forth the instrument and crushed it to pieces. 'Good evening,' said some one behind the youth. 'Good evening in return,' said he, and on looking round, there stood the little old man, who inquired, 'Wherefore am I summoned?' 'I wish to rescue the princess, and restore her to her father,' replied the herd-man.

Although all the doors were locked, the elf-king led him from his dungeon through many magnificent rooms until they came to a large hall, filled with all kinds of weapons—swords, spears, battle-axes of the finest polished steel. Here the little old man lighted a fire, and after that, by his orders, the herd-man had divested himself of his clothes, he cast them into the flames. Then opening a huge iron chest, he took from thence a sumptuous suit of armour of burnished gold, and desired the youth to put it on. He obeyed, and when thus equipped, the elf-king girded a sharp sword to his side, and said, 'No weapon can penetrate this cuirass, and by this sword the giant, it

is ordained, shall die.' Thus armed, the youth felt full of confidence, and bore himself as a knight, and as gallantly as if he had been born the son of a monarch. They then returned to the dark dungeon, when, after receiving the youth's thanks, the little old man went his way.

In the morning there was great stir and bustle throughout the palace. The giant had appointed that day for the celebration of his marriage with the beautiful princess, and had invited all his friends to partake of the festivities. The bride was attired in the most splendid manner, with a golden coronet, golden rings and armlets, and other costly ornaments that the ogre's mother had herself worn. The banquet was sumptuous, everything being provided in profusion, and many a bumper was quaffed on the joyful occasion. But the poor princess wept unceasingly. Her tears were so very hot that they scalded her cheeks as they fell.

At night when the giant was about to lead his bride to the nuptial couch, he sent his 'guard' to fetch the poor herd-man. But when the soldiers entered the dungeon, the prisoner was gone, and in his place stood a bold champion in complete armour. The men were panic-stricken, and fled; but the youth followed close at their heels to the courtyard of the palace, where the company were assembled to witness his execution. When the giant saw the knight he was furious, and said, 'Curse on thee, thou treacherous "Troll!"' Whilst he spake his eyes shot fire so fiercely as to pierce through the herd-man's panoply; but he stood undaunted and cried, 'Here for life or death, thou must fight me for thy beautiful bride.' He then drew his sword, which flashed like a burning

brand. When the ogre recognized it as the weapon by which he was to fall, he trembled and turned pale as death. The youth then strode up to him, raised the sword high in air, and at a single blow severed the monster's head from his shoulders. Such was the end of the giant.

When the bridal party saw what had happened, they were seized with fear and fled in every direction. But the princess sprang forward, and whilst embracing the herdman tenderly, thanked him for having preserved her life. Together they then proceeded to the shore, cast off the giant's shallop, and rowed away from the island.

After a long and weary pilgrimage they reached home. And there were great rejoicings throughout the land, that the king had recovered his only daughter, whom he had long mourned as dead. The nuptials of our hero and the beautiful princess were soon afterwards solemnized with great splendour. They lived together happily for many, many years, and saw both children and children's children grow up and flourish around them. And the little 'Pingla' and the crushed 'Horn' were, as a memorial, preserved in the palace, where they are indeed said to remain to the present day.

V. THE GIANT OUTWITTED.

ONCE there was a poor cottager—and many such there be—who dwelt in the depths of the forest. He had two children, a boy and a girl. One day he ordered them to cut sticks. The boy took an axe, his sister accompanied him, when they proceeded to do their father's bidding. But it so happened that during their wander-

ings they lost themselves, and could not find their way home again. Noon arrived, evening arrived, but the later it became the deeper the poor children got into the forest. The girl was alarmed, seated herself on the stump of a tree, and wept bitterly; but the boy kept up his spirits, and encouraged his sister as well as he could. 'Don't cry,' said he to her; 'I will build us a hut, and to-morrow at daylight we shall find the way home.' With these words he took his axe, and with some pine branches constructed a little bower. His sister now dried her tears, and thus the night was passed in the forest.

On the following morning the cottager's children resumed their search for the path, but were again unsuccessful. After they had wandered a long way the girl became wearied, sat herself down, and lamented their sad fate. 'Don't weep,' said the brother soothingly; 'the day is long, and before the sun sets in the forest we shall be at home.' 'I cannot go further,' replied his sister, 'I am so hungry, so very, very hungry.' But the boy's resolution failed him not, for he felt pretty well assured he could find a cure for that disease. He therefore desired his sister to remain where she was whilst he went in search of food.

After wandering a while he came to a small 'clearing' in the wood; in the middle of it was a hut, the roof of which was covered with sausages. Overjoyed at the sight, and with his mouth watering, he crept stealthily up to the building in hopes of getting possession of some of the dainties; and as all was quiet within-doors, he mounted on to the roof, when, peering down the hole serving as chimney into the room below, he espied an old giant and his wife, who dwelt there. The boy was greatly terrified,

and would have retreated, but the ogre having heard the noise overhead, shouted out in a stentorian voice, 'Who's that making such a disturbance on my roof?' 'Only a little bird,' replied the boy, in a subdued tone. 'If that's all,' growled the giant, 'thou canst not do much harm.' The boy now seized a string of sausages, and bore them away in all haste to his sister, who with fear and trembling had long been awaiting his return.

For some days the children fared sumptuously; but all their endeavours in the while to find their way home proved fruitless. At length the sausages were eaten up, and the boy was compelled to set out for more. Mounting softly, as before, on to the roof of the giant's abode, he helped himself to a second batch of the delicacies; but though in so doing he again disturbed the ogre, the latter was pacified on the assurance that he was 'only a little, little bird.'

After a time the boy was necessitated to go in search of a further supply of sausages for himself and sister. She now insisted on accompanying him to see how matters were managed. For a long time he refused her request, thinking it more prudent to go alone; but she was so very importunate, that he at length consented.

When, however, they reached the giant's hut the girl became alarmed and began to cry. 'Hush, hush,' said her brother, kindly; 'it is not so hazardous as thou imaginest.' As on former occasions, he crept on to the roof, seized hold of a lot of sausages, and threw them down to his sister, who stood below. When the ogre heard the noise above, he thundered out as before, 'Who's that over-

head?' 'Only a little, little bird,' responded the boy, meekly. But now the girl could not contain her mirth, and burst out into a loud laugh, He, he, he. The boy became frightened, and endeavoured to make good his retreat; but at the instant his foot slipped, and, breaking a hole in the roof, he fell headlong through the opening. When the girl saw what had happened she was terribly alarmed, and ran hastily back into the forest. 'So, so, my fine fellow,' bellowed out the giant as the boy tumbled into the room, 'I now see what kind of little bird thou art.' Then turning to his wife, 'Mother,' said he, 'take the boy and fatten him well, that we may have a "roast" one of these days.' The giantess did as her husband commanded. She seized the boy, put him in a coop, and fed him on the kernels of nuts and sweet milk, on which he throve wonderfully.

Things went on thus for some time. At length the ogre, desirous of ascertaining whether the boy was ready for the 'spit,' ordered him to put out his finger; but the prisoner, suspecting all was not right, substituted instead thereof a piece of wood. The giant laid hold of the stick, and thought that as his flesh was so hard, he must be uncommonly lean. He therefore ordered the old woman to give him a double supply of both nuts and milk.

Some days afterwards the giant went once more to the coop, thinking that by this time the boy ought to be as fat as butter. The finger, as before, was to be the criterion; but the ogre finding the stick, which the lad again poked out between the bars of his cage, as hard as ever, wondered greatly that with such good living he had not

acquired flesh. He threw the blame on his wife; but she said it was of no manner of use to stuff the boy any more, as it was not in his nature to be obese. 'If that's the case,' rejoined the giant, 'we may as well kill him at once, and I will go and invite our friends to the banquet. In the mean time thou canst heat the oven and "bake" the boy.' The ogress thought this a wise and proper decision, and promised compliance. The ogre now saddled his nag, and set forth on his journey.

When the giant was gone, his wife took the boy out of the coop, and after heating the oven, ordered him to seat himself on the 'bread-shovel;' but he, perceiving his life to be in danger, contrived to tumble from off the implement so soon as the ogress took hold of the handle. This manœuvre he repeated several times. At length the old lady fell into a towering passion, and abused him soundly for his stupidity. He, however, excused himself on the plea of inexperience. 'But, mother,' said he, 'if thou thyself wilt show me the proper way, I'll sit as firm as a rock.' The ogress, thinking his request reasonable, complied, and with her back bent seated herself on the shovel. Quick as thought the boy caught hold of the handle, and before one could say 'Jack Robinson' popped the old hag into the red-hot oven. Such was the fate of the giantess.

When she was dead the boy lost no time in collecting what food there was in the house, and then went in search of his sister. He found her in the little arbour he had erected for her on the first night of their wanderings; and as they had never more expected to see each other again, the meeting, as may be imagined, was joyful in the ex-

treme. Concluding that her brother had been devoured by the giant, she, since their parting, had wept incessantly over his sad fate.

On the giant's return home he wondered greatly at his wife not coming to the door to welcome him. 'But,' said he to himself, 'she has so many preparations to make for the feast as not to have time to think of me.' Dismounting from his steed, therefore, he entered the hut, where, however, to his surprise, she was nowhere to be found. 'Perhaps,' he argued, 'she may have gone to the forest to gather fuel; so in the mean while I'll see if the boy is properly "browned."' But on opening the door of the oven, instead of the lad, there sat his own wife burnt to a cinder. This horrid sight, coupled with the mortification at having been so outwitted, threw the giant into such a rage, that his heart burst asunder, and he fell dead on the hearth.

Some days subsequently, when the children's stock of provisions was exhausted, the boy thought it might be as well to ascertain how things were going on with the ogre. But this time he would not permit his sister to accompany him. On reaching the hut he, as usual, crept up on to the roof, and peeped down the chimney; but it is impossible to imagine his joy when he saw the giant lying dead at the mouth of the oven. He ran in all haste to his sister with the agreeable intelligence; and in company they returned to the ogre's abode, where they collected all the silver and other valuables belonging to him and his wife.

On the other side of the giant's hut the children found a path leading through the forest. This they pursued for

some distance, and at length reached home in safety; and so ends my story.

VI. THE GIANT OUTWITTED. (ANOTHER VERSION.)

ANOTHER version of the above story runs as follows:—

In the deepest recesses of the forest there once dwelt a cruel old giantess, who had a great liking for the flesh of little children, whom she used to attract to her abode by placing delicacies in their way; and when she got them into her clutches, she would 'roast' and devour them.

Not far from her hut lived a poor cottager who had a son and daughter. Having little in the house to eat, he one day sent the children into the wood to gather berries. They set forth, and after wandering about for a time, came to a lofty hill, on which they espied a little hovel, the roof of which was covered with plum-cakes. Being very hungry, they took counsel together, and came to the conclusion they should like to have some of these dainties. The boy, therefore, crept quietly on to the roof of the hut; but the old giantess—for it was she who inhabited it—hearing the noise above, inquired in a shrill voice, 'Who's nibbling at my cakes?' 'Only God's small angel's, only God's small angels,' replied he. 'Eat in peace, then,' rejoined the old woman. The boy now seized hold of a number of cakes, and carried them off in safety to his sister.

When these were demolished, the children again proceeded to the hut of the ogress for a further supply. The boy tried to dissuade his sister from accompanying him; but go she would. When they were mounted on the

roof, and hard at work filling their pockets with the cakes, the old woman inquired as before, 'Who's that overhead?' 'Only God's little angels, only God's little angels,' responded the boy. All would now have ended well, had not the girl indiscreetly sung out, 'And I, and I.' This enlightened the hag as to the true state of affairs; and without loss of time she, therefore, seized hold of the children's legs, which were dangling through a hole in the roof, and pulled them both into the hut, at the same time exclaiming, 'Pretty angels, indeed, you are, my little dears!' and then added, 'you'll make me a capital roast.'

The ogress then inquired of the girl, in what manner her mother killed pigs. 'Sticks them with a knife, to be sure,' was her reply. 'No, no,' said the boy, interrupting; 'she strangles them.' 'Then that's the way I'll serve you both,' rejoined the old woman, and forthwith set about preparing a noose.

When this was ready she put it about the boy's neck, on which he fell to the ground as if defunct. 'What! art thou dead already?' inquired the giantess. 'To be sure I am,' replied the urchin. 'Not quite, I should think,' remarked she; 'for if thou wert, thou couldst not speak.' 'I talk,' said the boy, 'because it is only right to let thee know my mother never kills a pig until it's fat.' 'Neither will I kill thee and thy sister,' rejoined the ogress, after a moment's reflection, 'until you are both in prime condition.'

After that she had put the children in a coop, she further inquired of them, 'How does your mother fatten pigs?' 'With grains and wash,' said the girl. 'No, no,' put

in the brother, 'she gives them nut-kernels and sweet milk.' 'Then you shall have the same,' said the ogress.

Desirous of ascertaining how the children were getting on, the old lady some days subsequently repaired to their coop. 'Put out your fingers,' said she, 'that I may know whether you are fit to kill.' The girl was on the point of complying, but the boy prevented her, and in lieu of his digit, presented the ogress with a piece of wood. 'You are still too lean for the knife,' she observed, on finding the stick quite hard, 'and I must therefore fatten you a little longer.'

On the ogress's next visit to the children she, as on the former occasion, was desirous of feeling their fingers; but this time the boy presented her instead with a cabbage-stalk that he found in the coop. This she cut with a knife, and finding it very soft, came to the conclusion that the children must now be fat, and ready for the table.

She therefore took them into the hut, and when the oven was burning hot, desired one of them to sit down on the bread-shovel. The girl was about to obey, but the boy pushed her aside, and seated himself on the implement. When, however, she was in the act of chucking him into the oven, he pretended to lose his balance, and fell to the ground. This happened three or four times, which made the ogress very indignant. But her wrath was somewhat mollified by the boy telling her, in the most winning way, that 'if she herself would show him how to sit properly he was quite sure all would go right the next time.' She consented; but no sooner was she on the bread-shovel than he caught hold of the handle, and in a trice shot the old lady into the oven and closed the door upon her.

The cottager's children then took possession of all the valuables in the hut, and returned rejoicing to their father's cottage; but as no one since the catastrophe has had the curiosity to look into the ogress's oven, I cannot say with certainty whether or no the old lady is as yet properly 'done.'

VII. THE GIANT'S FOUR TREASURES.

THERE was once a poor cottager and his wife, who had three sons. The two eldest laboured with their father in the forest, and on his little farm; but the youngest kept at home with his mother, and assisted her in household affairs. He was, therefore, little liked by his brothers, who looked on him as a milk-sop, and they 'snubbed' him whenever opportunity offered.

At length the old people died, and the sons had to divide the inheritance. The two eldest, however, took possession of everything of value, leaving the youngest only an old kneading-trough; one of them observing, 'that as he was always baking and fiddle-faddling within-doors, it would be just the thing for him.' But the poor fellow thought to himself that, 'miserable as was the legacy, he would still make the best of it.' He determined, nevertheless, not to remain longer at home, and therefore took leave of his brothers, and set off to seek his fortune in the wide world.

Arrived on the borders of a great lake, he caulked the leaky kneading-trough, and converted it into a boat. Two sticks served for oars; and thus equipped he put to sea.

On reaching the opposite shore he saw a royal palace, and going up to it, asked and obtained permission to speak with the king. His Majesty inquired, 'Who art thou, and what dost thou want with me?' 'I am the son of a poor cottager,' replied the youth, 'and own nothing in this world but an old kneading-trough, and have come here to seek service.' The king smiled and said, 'Of a truth, thou hast but a small inheritance, but fortune often takes an extraordinary turn.' The youth was then enrolled amongst the royal pages, and for his intelligence and spirit, was soon liked by every one.

The king had an only daughter who was both fair and witty, so much so, that her beauty and good sense were the theme of universal admiration. Suitors came from the east and from the west to solicit her hand; but she refused to accept any one unless he brought her, as a bridal present, the 'golden sword,' 'the three golden hens,' the 'golden lamp,' and the 'golden harp,' owned by a giant living at the other side of the lake. Many kings' sons and champions had gone in quest of these treasures; but none had ever returned, for the ogre had seized on and devoured them all. This state of things caused the king much inquietude, as he was now apprehensive he should not obtain a son-in-law, and that consequently there would be no heir to his throne.

When all this was told the page he said to himself, 'that to win the beautiful princess was well worth a venture.' He therefore requested an audience of the king, and stated his desire to hazard all for the maiden's sake; but his Majesty was wroth at his presumption. 'How,' said he, 'is a youth like thee to enter the lists with a

giant who has overcome all antagonists?' The page, however, renewed his entreaties; and when the king saw it was the youth's fixed resolve, his anger was mollified, and he granted his prayer, kindly adding, 'Thy life is staked on the adventure; be careful of thyself, as I should be sorry to lose thee.'

Before daylight in the morning the ogre proceeded to his barn and began thrashing, the noise of which operation resounded throughout all the mountains thereabouts. The youth now put a number of small pebbles in his wallet, and then crept up on to the roof of the building, wherein he made a small aperture to enable him to see what was passing beneath. The giant invariably wore the 'golden sword' at his side. This possessed the very wonderful property that when he was wroth it would, of itself, emit a loud and ringing noise. Whilst, therefore, the giant was thrashing away at his best, the page, from his perch above, dropped a pebble on to the weapon, which at once began to 'clang.' 'What dost thou "clang" for?' said the ogre, eyeing at the same time the sword; 'I'm not angry now.' The giant resumed his labours; but presently came 'clang' the second. The ogre started, knit his brows, but went on working again. When, however, the weapon 'clanged' for the third time, he fell into a towering passion, unbuckled the belt by which it was attached to his side, and cast it out of the door, exclaiming at the same time, 'Lie there, thou beast, until I have done thrashing.' But the page allowed not the sword to remain long on the ground, for descending from the roof of the barn, he seized hold of the golden prize; then hurrying to his boat, he rowed rejoicingly to

the other side of the lake, where he concealed his booty.

The following day, after placing some barley and a ball of twine in his wallet, he again set off for the giant's abode, near to which he hid himself. After watching some time, he saw, not far from the beach, the ogre's three 'golden hens,' their feathers glistening beautifully in the sun. He went cautiously up to them, and by means of the barley succeeded, after a time, in luring them into his boat, when he secured their legs with the twine he had brought with him for that purpose. He then made for the opposite strand, where he deposited his prizes along with the 'enchanted sword.'

The third day the page filled his wallet with rock-salt, and crossing the lake, concealed himself as usual. Towards nightfall he noticed that the giant's chimney smoked greatly, whence he concluded the ogre was preparing his supper. He therefore mounted the roof of the hut, and peeping through a chink into the room below, he saw a huge pot boiling on the fire. Taking some lumps of salt out of his wallet, he dropped them into the pot, and then slipping down from the roof, hid himself to watch the event.

After a time the giantess lifted the pot from the fire, poured the porridge it contained into a large bowl, and placed the latter on the table. The giant, being very hungry, set to work with right good will; but when he had taken a mouthful of the porridge, and found that it was salt itself, he jumped up from his seat, stamped with rage, and swore he was poisoned. His wife asserted, nevertheless, that the porridge was 'tip-top.' 'Then eat it thyself,' roared the monster, 'for I'll be hanged if I

touch any more of thy messes.' The ogress attempted to do so; but at the first spoonful she made a horrid wry face, and spat it out again, exclaiming, 'The devil's bad luck, for such a villainous mixture has never before been tasted.'

'Nothing was now left for the giantess but to prepare another dish of porridge. Snatching the 'golden lamp' from the wall, where it always hung, with one hand, and with a bucket in the other, she therefore proceeded in all haste to the well for a supply of water. Whilst, however, she was drawing up the bucket, and when in a stooping position, the youth came unawares behind her, and catching her by the heels, pitched her headlong down the abyss. He then seized hold of the 'golden lamp,' which the ogress had placed on the brink of the well, and bore it away triumphantly to the other side of the lake.

Whilst this matter was passing, the giant cogitated on his wife's long absence, and, his patience being at length exhausted, he searched everywhere for her, but she was not to be found. At length he heard a splashing sort of noise in the well, which he presently made out to proceed from the ogress, who was struggling in the water. With great labour and difficulty, however, he at length succeeded in raising her to the surface, and when she had somewhat recovered, he inquired, 'What has become of my "golden lamp"?' 'I can't tell,' responded the hag; 'all I know is, that some one came behind me and threw me neck and crop down the well.'

The giant was now much cast down. 'Three of my treasures,' said he, plaintively, 'are already gone, and I have now only the "golden harp" left; but the thief,

whoever he is, shan't get that, for I will secure it with twelve locks.'

While the ogre thus bewailed his misfortune, the page was seated on the opposite strand, hugging himself on his good luck. But the greatest risk was yet to be run—the obtaining of the 'golden harp.' For a long time the youth pondered on the matter, but could not think of any scheme likely to be successful; nevertheless he determined on crossing the lake once more, and to be guided by circumstances.

Off, therefore, he started, and, as aforetime, was about to hide himself near the abode of the ogre; but the latter was now on the look-out for squalls, and no longer to be caught napping; so on getting sight of the page he at once pounced on and secured him. 'I have thee now, thou thief,' said the infuriated monster. 'No one but thou hast stolen my "golden sword," my "three golden hens," and my "golden lamp."' The youth, fully believing his hour was come, was in great tribulation, and falling on his knees said, 'Only spare me this time, dear, good gentleman, and I will never more molest thee.' 'I'll take good care thou sha'n't,' roared the ogre; 'no one ever escapes with life out of my hands.' He then shut the page up in a cupboard to fatten him on nuts and sweet milk.

Though a prisoner, the youth kept a good heart, and eat and drank his fill. Matters went on thus for a time; but at length the giant was anxious to know if he was ready for the feast. Proceeding, therefore, to the cupboard, he bored a hole in the side and commanded the page to poke out his finger; but the youth, 'smelling a rat,' gave him instead the end of a recently-peeled alder

wand. The giant cut the stick with a knife, and the red juice, blood it seemed, ran out; but as the wood was hard to the feel, he concluded the captive must be miserably lean, and therefore gave him a double allowance of good things.

On the giant's second visit to the page some days afterwards, the latter, in lieu of his finger, presented the ogre with a carrot that happened to be lying in the cupboard, which he also cut, and as his knife found ready access into the root, he concluded that his prisoner must now be quite ready to 'discuss.'

On the following morning, therefore, he said to his wife, 'Mother, the youth is now fat enough; roast him forthwith, and whilst thou art about it, I will go round to our friends and invite them to dinner.' The ogress promised compliance, and prepared the oven. When this was heated, she ordered the page to seat himself on the bread-shovel; but at the instant she laid hold of the handle he contrived to fall from off it. The like happened half-a-score of times. At last the ogress waxed wroth, and cursed him for his stupidity. But the youth implored her not to be angry, for he really knew not, he said, how to sit properly. 'Then I'll show thee,' rejoined the hag; and suiting the action to the word she, with back bent and knees drawn up to her chin, placed herself on the shovel. Hardly was she seated, however, when the page caught hold of the handle, and in double quick time popped the old lady into the oven and closed the door upon her.

The youth now took the ogress's fur cloak, and having filled it with straw laid it on the bed. Then having found

the giant's great bunch of keys, he opened the 'twelve locks' with which it was secured, and possessed himself of the much coveted 'golden harp,' with which he hastened to his skiff that was lying hid amongst the rushes by the side of the lake.

A while afterward the ogre returned home. 'Where on earth can mother be?' thought he to himself, when his wife was nowhere visible. But on turning his eyes towards the bed, and seeing her, as he supposed, lying there, he exclaimed, 'Oh, there she is; she has lain down to rest a while. I thought as much. But,' he went on to say, 'she seems to sleep deuced soundly.' As, however, the guests were momentarily expected, the ogre thought it best to rouse her. He therefore sung out lustily, 'Wake up, wake up, mother.' But there being no response to his call, he repeated it, though with no better effect. On this he got into a great rage, and seizing the cloak, gave it a furious tug, when he found to his dismay that instead of his 'old woman,' it was a truss of straw he was so maltreating.

On making this discovery, the giant began to suspect all was not right, and hastened to see after the 'golden harp.' But the bunch of keys were gone, the twelve locks opened, and the treasure vanished. Worse than all this had, however, happened; for when he opened the oven door to see how the dinner was getting on, lo and behold! there sat his wife, baked to the consistency of a mummy, grinning horribly in his face!

The giant was beside himself with passion; and, foaming at the mouth, rushed out of the house to take vengeance on him who had been the cause of all these misfortunes.

When he reached the shore of the lake he saw, at a short distance, the page sitting in his shallop and playing on the 'golden harp,' its strings glittering in the sunshine, and the sweet tones of which floated harmoniously over the water. Instantly he plunged into the flood to seize the culprit; but it being deep thereabouts, he was unable to effect his purpose. He therefore set to work with might and main to drink the lake dry, and gulped down such immense volumes of water, as to occasion a strong current to set towards the land. This drew the page's little skiff nearer to the ogre; but just as the latter was on the point of seizing the enemy, the quantity of fluid he had swallowed caused him to burst asunder, so that he fell lifeless on the ground. Such was the end of the giant.

Leaving the carcass of the ogre on the beach, the youth pursued his voyage rejoicingly across the lake. When he reached the opposite shore, he combed his fine golden hair, put on a rich dress, and girded the 'golden sword' to his side. Thus equipped, and with the 'golden harp' in one hand, and the 'golden lamp' in the other, he presented himself before the king, who, with his daughter and nobles, were seated in the banqueting hall. His Majesty was rejoiced to see his favourite page again, and congratulated him on his safe return. The youth then went up to the beautiful princess, made his obeisance, and laid at her feet the giant's costly treasures.

There were now great rejoicings throughout the land, because the princess had not only obtained the object of her wishes, but a handsome and gallant lover. Shortly afterwards the king caused the nuptials of the young couple to be celebrated with much pomp and ceremony.

And at his Majesty's death our hero was elected to succeed him on the throne, where he reigned long and happily; and so ends my tale.

In another version of the above story the page Plagge, as he is there called, has to steal a 'golden fäll,' or counterpane, from the giant, for which purpose he provides himself with a bucket of yeast.

When the night was well advanced, the ogre and his wife fell into a deep sleep, and both presently began to snore loudly. Plagge was not slow to take advantage of the favourable moment; so creeping softly into the room, he emptied his bucket between the worthy couple as they reposed on the coveted treasure in question, and then hid himself behind the door to watch the result of his manœuvre. 'Mother, mother,' presently exclaimed the ogre, in great tribulation, 'what the deuce is all this wet in the bed?' 'Wet?' rejoined the old lady in anger; 'why you ought to know best yourself.' A great deal of recrimination now took place between the loving pair, each attributing the supposed mishap to the other, and such expressions as 'You filthy wretch!' 'You nasty fellow!' were freely bandied between them. At last, however, the altercation was brought to a summary conclusion by the giant kicking his better half fairly out of bed, and ordering her forthwith to purify the 'golden counterpane' in a neighbouring stream.

Though somewhat against the grain, the old lady was necessitated to obey the commands of her liege lord, and gathering up the polluted coverlid, she left the house. But she had hardly crossed the threshold when Plagge, who

had been chuckling over the recent scene, snatched it out of her hands, and carried it off in triumph to the opposite side of the lake.

VIII. THE TWO QUEENS.

THERE was once a wicked old woman, and many such there be, who had a daughter, as also a stepdaughter. Her own daughter was very ugly, and in temper the devil himself; but the stepdaughter, on the contrary, was exceedingly handsome, and of so amiable a disposition, that she was beloved by every one. The stepmother and her daughter were therefore envious, and constantly showing their ill-will to the unfortunate girl.

It happened one day that she was sent by her stepmother to the well. On reaching it a little hand was stretched above the surface of the water, and a voice was heard to say, 'Maiden, gentle and fair, give me thy golden apple, and in return I will "wish" thee three good "wishes."' The tone was so moving that the virgin took compassion on the suppliant, and placed the apple in the extended palm. She then stooped over the well to fill her pitcher, and whilst in the act was very careful not to disturb the water. When she was gone, the '*Käll Rä*,'*

* In the olden times, as elsewhere said, there was near to every temple an '*Offer Källä*,' or sacrificial spring, where the bodies of the victims, whether man or beast, were washed prior to immolation. Here the priestess received gifts from the people, and in return counselled them in regard to their maladies and temporal concerns: and as these priestesses died without baptism or receiving the sacrament, they were believed to have been transformed into elves, and to dwell in the sacred springs in question.

These elves are also called '*Käll Jungfruar*,' or maids of the foun-

or genii of the spring, 'wished' that the lovely maiden might be three times handsomer than she was; that whenever she smiled a golden ring might drop from her mouth; and that red roses might blossom on her footsteps. On the instant the three 'wishes' were fulfilled; and from that day forward the virgin was called 'White Swan,' and reports of her great beauty spread far and wide.

When the old stepmother saw all this, she was very angry, and considered within herself how her own daughter might attain to equal loveliness; and, having learnt the way in which 'White Swan' had become so very beauteous, she sent her also to the spring. When she came there a small white hand was extended above the water, and a voice said, 'Maiden, fair and lovely, give me thy golden apple, and I will in return "wish" thee three good "wishes."' But the old woman's daughter was both malignant and stingy, and would never part with anything; and instead, therefore, of acceding to the prayer of the genii, she cursed her, struck the uplifted hand, and replied, 'Don't flatter thyself that thou wilt get a golden apple from me.' Then filling her vessel, and whilst so doing intentionally greatly disturbed the water, she went away in a rage. The '*Käll Rä*' was wroth, and in return for the maiden's ungracious conduct, 'wished' her three bad 'wishes:' firstly, that she should be three times uglier than at present; secondly, that every time she laughed a dead rat might fall from

tain. At times they have been seen by Christian men reclining on the margin of the water, on beds of flowers, and are described as of surpassing beauty; and it is said of them, 'that to him who cleanses out the holy fount over which they preside, they are gentle and kind, but that sickness and misfortune will surely accompany to their homes those who in any way defile these holy waters.'

out of her mouth; and, thirdly, that wherever she trod Fox-tail grass should spring up. And so it forthwith happened. Hence the girl was nicknamed '*Fox-tail*,' and her horrid ugliness and villainous temper were the talk of all the country round about.

The stepmother could ill brook that her own daughter, owing to her most forbidding appearance and bad disposition, should be looked on with utter disgust by every one; whilst 'White Swan,' on the contrary, from her transcendent loveliness and many amiable qualities, was a universal favourite; and from that time forward, therefore, the poor girl suffered all the neglect and injustice that usually fall to the lot of stepchildren.

'White Swan' had a brother who was very dear to her, and he, on his part, loved her with all his heart. The youth had long before left home to seek his fortune, and was now page to a king in a far, far distant country. But the courtiers were jealous of him on account of the grace and favour he had found with their lord, and anxiously sought a pretext to ruin him.

They therefore closely watched his every movement, and one day went before the sovereign and said, 'O king, we well know that thou wilt not suffer thy servants to do evil, and to act unlawfully. We cannot, consequently, conceal from thee that the foreign page in thy service bends the knee morning and evening to an idol.' But his Majesty, thinking the accusation arose from jealousy and ill will, would not believe it. Seeing the king incredulous, the courtiers said he might, if he pleased, be an eye-witness to the fact. Leading him, therefore, to the door of the page's apartment, they requested him to peep through

the keyhole. He did so; and when he saw the page on his knees before a beautiful image, what else could he but think that all they had told him was true.

The king was very wroth, and ordered the page to be brought before him, and, for the great sin he had committed, condemned him to death. But the youth defended himself, and said, 'O king, thou must not suppose I adore an idol; it is the statue of my sister that thou hast seen, and I pray to God, morning and evening, that He would be pleased to protect her, because she is in the power of a wicked stepmother.' The king then commanded the statue to be brought to him, and was never wearied of admiring its beauty. 'If it is true, as thou tellest me,' said he to the page, 'that this is thy sister, she shall be my queen, and thou thyself shalt go and bring her hither; but should thou have lied, then shalt thou be cast into the den of lions.'

The king then caused a galley to be fitted up in the most sumptuous manner, and sent the page, with a strong guard, and costly presents, to conduct his sister to the palace.

After a long and tedious passage, the youth arrived in his own conntry, where he made the needful preparations to fulfil his lord's behests. When, however, he was on the point of departure with his sister, his stepmother and her daughter begged permission to sail in the same ship. The page liked not the proposal, and at first refused their request; but as 'White Swan' interested herself for them, he at length consented.

They then put to sea; but ere long so violent a storm arose, that every one thought they must all perish. The

page, nevertheless, was of good courage, and, ascending the rigging to look for land, presently called out to 'White Swan,' who stood on deck, 'Sister, dear, I see the shore;' but it blew so hard that the maiden could not hear his words. She therefore asked her stepmother what it was her brother said. 'Oh,' replied the wicked woman, 'he says that unless thou throwest thy golden casket—which was the king's gift—into the sea, we shall never more set foot on God's green earth.' When 'White Swan' heard this she, as desired, cast the costly treasure into the deeps.

After a while, the page again cried out to his sister, '"White Swan," it is now time to deck thyself as bride, for our voyage will soon be ended;' but from the force of the tempest his words were inaudible. Turning to her stepmother, the maiden inquired what it was her brother said. 'That we shall never again touch dry land unless thou throwest thyself into the sea,' rejoined the old hag. 'White Swan' thought this very strange; and whilst pondering on the matter, the wicked stepmother ran up to her and pushed her overboard. Borne away on the raging billows, she was received by the '*Hafs Frun*,* who rules over all those who perish in the waves.

When the page descended from aloft and inquired of the stepmother if his sister was ready, she told him, with

* The water, as well as the land, teems with elves, of whom the '*Hafs Frun*' holds the first rank. She reigns over the inhabitants of the deep in like manner as the '*Skoys Frun*,' or lady of the woods, over the birds and beasts of the forest. The 'Hafs Frun' dwells as well in inland waters as in the ocean itself. She is at times seen combing her long and dishevelled tresses, or spreading out her snow-white garments, on rocky islets, tending in the while her snow-white cattle. She is full of guile, and her appearance bodes no good to the poor fisherman, who for that day at least must not expect success in his calling; but, on the contrary, look out for squalls and bad weather.

many crocodile tears, that poor 'White Swan' had fallen into the sea. He was horror-stricken, and the sailors, knowing the punishment that awaited them for taking such bad care of the king's intended bride, were greatly affrighted.

The old woman now hit upon another villainy. She said, that if they placed the bridal ornaments on her own daughter, no one would know that poor 'White Swan' was dead. The page indignantly refused; but the crew, in fear of their lives, at length compelled him to give his consent. 'Fox-tail' was therefore adorned to the uttermost with golden rings and costly jewels. But the poor page was plunged into the deepest grief, for he could not forget his sister's sad end.

Whilst all this was going on, they reached the shore, where the king and the court had, with great pomp, come to meet them. Magnificent carpets were laid for the royal bride to tread on, and she was escorted from the ship with the highest honours. But when the king saw 'Fox-tail,' and learnt that she was the maiden who was to be his wife, he found how grievously he had been deceived, and was fearfully wroth. He therefore caused the page to be cast into the lions' den; but as he would not break the royal word, he married the hideous creature, and she thus became queen in her sister's stead.

'White Swan' had a little pet dog, called '*Snow-drop*,' on which she set the highest value. Now that his young mistress was no more, and that there was no one to take care of the faithful animal, he, in his distress, took refuge in the palace kitchen, and laid himself down before the fire. At night, when every one had retired to rest, the

head cook remarked that the door opened of itself, and a pretty little duck, with a chain hanging from its neck, entered the room, and that wherever the bird trod the most beautiful red roses sprang up. Going up straightway to the dog, the duck then sang as follows :—

'Poor little Snowdrop !
Once thou rested on blue silk cushions,
Now thou liest in the grey ashes.
My poor brother ! he sits in the lions' den.'
Woe worth "Fox-tail ;" she sleeps on my lord's arm.'

And, with a profound sigh, added, 'Poor me ! I shall come here other two nights, and then thou wilt no more see me.' She now caressed the little dog, who, on his part, was very loving towards her. After a time the door opened of itself, and the bird departed.

The next morning at daylight the chief cook gathered up the roses strewed over the floor, and with them garnished the dishes that were borne to the king's table. His Majesty could not sufficiently admire the lovely flowers, and inquired whence they came. The man then related all that he had seen during the preceding night, as also what he had heard the duck say to the little dog. The king, on learning this, was confounded, and gave orders to the cook that when the bird next appeared he himself should be summoned.

At night the little duck repeated her visit to Snowdrop, and sang as before. A messenger was immediately despatched to his Majesty, but he unfortunately did not arrive until a moment after the bird was gone. Again the floor was overspread with beautiful roses, which diffused the most delightful fragrance around.

The king, being thus disappointed, determined that if

the duck appeared once more she should not escape him; and he therefore concealed himself in the kitchen. When he had waited a long time, and that it was drawing towards midnight, the duck entered the room, and, as was her wont, went up to the dog, and sung as heretofore:—

'Poor little Snowdrop!
Once thou rested on blue silk cushions,
Now thou liest in the grey ashes.
My poor brother! he sits in the lions' den.
Woe worth "Fox-tail;" she sleeps on my lord's arm.'

'Poor me!' continued the duck, with a deep-drawn sigh; 'I shall never see thee more.' Again she fondled the little dog, who, on his part, fully returned her endearments. Just as she was on the point of departure, however, the king started up from his place of concealment, and seized her by the foot. Instantly the duck was transformed into a terrible dragon; but the king still held her fast. Afterwards she, in turn, assumed many forms,—those of a serpent, a wolf, and other fearful beasts and reptiles. Nevertheless, his Majesty let not go his hold. At length the 'Hafs Frun' pulled hard upon her chain; but as the king still retained his grasp, the links sprang asunder with a fearful noise and crash. Instantly there stood before the monarch a maiden, whom he at once recognized as the original of the beautiful statue he had seen in the page's possession, though far more lovely, who thanked him warmly for having delivered her from the power of the 'Troll.'

The king was overwhelmed with joy. He took the virgin in his arms, kissed her, and said, 'Thee, and none other, will I have for my queen. That thy brother was

guiltless,' he went on to say, 'I now perceive clearly;' and immediately afterwards he sent people to the lions' den, to ascertain if he was still in existence. To their astonishment, he was found sitting quietly in the midst of the ferocious beasts, which had done him no manner of harm. The king rejoiced greatly, and congratulated himself on all having ended so well.. The brother and sister then told him the deceitful way in which they had been dealt with by their stepmother.

When it was daylight the king ordered a great banquet to be prepared, and invited the most distinguished people in the country to be partakers of it. Whilst they sat at table, and were making merry, his Majesty related a 'Saga,' in which was embodied all that had happened to the brother and sister, and of the way in which they had been betrayed by the cruel and unnatural stepmother. When the story was ended, the guests looked at each other with wonderment, and all declared that such a crime was unheard of. The king now turned to his mother-in-law, and said, 'As a reward for my tale, tell me, I pray thee, what punishment is commensurate for destroying so innocent a life?' The deceitful old woman, not at all aware that her villainy was detected, replied briskly, 'Deserve? why, to be thrown into a cauldron of molten lead.' The king then put the like question to 'Fox-tail.' 'To be boiled in tar,' rejoined she. His Majesty could no longer restrain his fury; and rising hurriedly from the table, exclaimed, 'You have both passed judgment on yourselves, and that very doom you shall undergo.' The sentence was at once carried into execution, no one but 'White Swan' interceding for the culprits.

The king then celebrated his nuptials with the beautiful maiden of his choice, and every one thought a more lovely queen was not to be found in the world. To the intrepid page he gave his own sister in marriage, which caused great joy over the whole kingdom. Both couples lived long and happily together, and had a numerous progeny—the sons brave, and the daughters beautiful and virtuous; and, if report is to be credited, one and all are flourishing at the present day.

IX. THE SIX HUNDRED MILE BOOTS.

THERE was once a peasant who dwelt in the forest. Near to his cottage was a meadow on which grew beautiful grass. He set a high value on this field, and was more careful of it than anything else he possessed. But on summer mornings he observed that the grass was trampled down, and, from the marks in the dew, by human feet. This greatly vexed him, and he was very desirous of ascertaining who it was that caused the mischief.

For a while he considered within himself how he should discover the trespasser, and at length decided on sending his eldest son to watch the field. The young man promised to do his best, and started off on the errand. How it happened is hard to say, but he had not been long on the look-out before he felt himself drowsy, and ere midnight was buried in a deep sleep. His repose was so sound that he did not awake until the sun was well up in the heavens. Though the grass, whilst he slept, was trampled on in the usual manner, he returned home just as wise as he went.

The next evening the second son kept watch. He talked big, and promised to throw light on the affair. Like his elder brother, however, he soon fell asleep, and did not waken until broad daylight. The grass in the mean time had been disturbed as before, and he returned to his father unable to clear up the mystery.

All this was quite beyond the peasant's comprehension, and he therefore determined not to trouble himself more about the matter. The youngest son, however, came to his parent, and begged permission to try his luck. 'It's not very likely,' replied the old man, 'that thou, who art so young, can keep better watch than thy brothers.' But the youth persevering in his request, at length obtained the desired leave, and at once set off for the beautiful meadow, although his father and brothers fancied they could well guess what would be the result of his mission.

The youth watched both long and well; but everything remained quiet until an early hour in the morning. He then heard a sound in the air as of birds on the wing, and the next instant three doves flitted past him, and alighted in the meadow. Shortly afterwards, however, the birds laid aside their *fjader-hamnar*, literally feather disguises, or mantles, and stood revealed three beautiful virgins. Presently they commenced threading a dance on the green grass; and their motions were so light and aerial, that their feet seemed hardly to touch the ground. The youth now clearly understood who it was that had trampled on his father's field, but was nevertheless somewhat puzzled as to who the three maidens could be. One of them was superlatively lovely, and he said to himself, 'He should prefer her to all other women in the world.' After

watching their movements for a while, he crept cautiously up to their mantles, and took possession of them. He then concealed himself hard by, to see how the adventure would terminate.

A little before sunrise the maidens ceased dancing, and prepared to depart, but their mantles were not to be found. They were terribly frightened; and, in a state of great trepidation, ran in every direction in search of them. At last they came to the spot where the youth lay hid, and asked him if he had taken their mantles; and if so, begged him, with honeyed words, to restore them. 'Yes,' replied he, 'I have your mantles, but will not return them to you except on two conditions.' The prayers of the maidens availing not, they at length agreed to his terms, and requested him to name them, promising at the same time to fulfil them to the letter. 'My first condition,' said the youth, addressing himself to the one who had won his heart, 'is that thou inform me who you are, and from whence you come.' 'I am a king's daughter,' replied she, 'and these are my maids of honour: we are from the royal palace east of the sun, and north of the earth, where no mortal can come.' 'My second condition,' continued the youth, 'is that thou, charming princess, pledge me thy faith, and fix a day for our marriage, for thee and thee only will I wed.'

As the sun was now on the point of appearing above the tree-tops, it was high time for the maidens to depart, and the king's daughter was therefore necessitated to comply. The youth embraced the beauteous princess, and they vowed eternal fidelity to each other. He then restored the mantles to the fair owners; and after that he

had taken an affectionate leave of his beloved, they rose into the air, and were presently lost to sight.

When it was broad daylight, the youth returned home, where many questions were put to him as to what curious things he had observed during his night-watch. But he was very reserved, and replied, 'that, having fallen asleep, he had seen nothing.' His brothers therefore jeered him, and turned him into ridicule, for pretending to do what they, with their greater experience, had failed to accomplish.

At length the day arrived that the princess had appointed for their nuptials. The youth then went to his father, and requested him to prepare a banquet for the occasion, and to invite all their relations and friends. The old man consented, and all kinds of good things were placed on the table.

Near unto midnight, when the guests were assembled, the rattling of wheels was heard outside the house, and the next minute a splendid carriage, drawn by prancing horses, drew up at the door. Within the vehicle, dressed as a bride, and attended by her maids of honour, sat the beautiful princess. Great was the astonishment expressed by the company. The youth gave the royal maiden a joyful welcome, and he then related to the guests his adventures on the night he kept watch in his father's favourite meadow. The wedding was duly celebrated, and many bumpers were drank to the health of the happy couple; and every one who saw the young bride congratulated the bridegroom on having made so fortunate a marriage.

Before daylight on the following morning the princess

said she must take her departure. The youth was in despair, and inquired 'why she would not bless him with her company for a short time longer.' 'My father, who reigned over the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth,' said she, 'was killed by the "Troll" (evil spirits), and I am kept by them in close durance, so that I can only absent myself for a short time about midnight; and if I do not return before sunrise, it will cost me my life.' On hearing this the youth would no longer detain his bride, but wished her a safe and happy journey. On taking leave she presented him, as a souvenir, with a gold ring; and each of her maids of honour gave him a golden apple. The bride and her attendants then seated themselves in the golden chariot, and quickly disappeared.

From that day forward the youth's peace of mind was gone. He was continually thinking as to how he could reach the 'beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth.' One day, therefore, he went to his father and requested permission to go in search of his bride. 'Do as thou pleasest,' replied the old man; 'but it is not likely thy journey will come to much good.' Taking leave of his kinsfolk, the youth then set off from home alone.

Over mountains and green valleys, and through many and great kingdoms, he wandered without meeting with any one who could direct him to the beautiful palace, of which he was in search. At length one day he came to a forest where he heard a great noise and uproar, and on proceeding to the spot, found two giants engaged in a violent altercation. 'What are you quarrelling about, giants two?' he inquired. 'Why, our father is dead,' said the one, 'and we have divided his inheritance, with the

exception of a pair of boots, which we cannot agree about.' 'That matter may soon be settled,' said the youth; 'as you are not able to make up your minds which of you is to be their possessor, let me have them. I am a wanderer, and have far to go.' 'What thou sayest may be very true,' rejoined the spokesman; 'but it is not with these boots as with other boots, for whoever wears them can take six hundred miles at a stride.' On hearing this, the youth became doubly desirous of possessing the precious boots, and told the giants they might just as well give them to him, in which case there would no longer be cause for ill blood between themselves. He, in short, talked so well, that they began to think his advice to the purpose, and in the end made him a present of the wonderful boots. The youth forthwith drew them on, and afterwards continued his wanderings in distant lands.

After the lapse of some time he came to another vast forest, where he again heard a great noise. It proceeded from other two giants who where bandying high words with each other. 'What are you disputing about, giants two?' inquired the youth. 'Why, our father is dead,' said the one, 'and we have been sharing his effects; but here is a cloak which we cannot agree about.' 'That matter may soon be settled,' replied the youth. 'I am a traveller, and have far to go, so give it to me.' 'What thou sayest may be very true,' rejoined the giant; 'but this cloak is not like other cloaks, for whoever puts it on becomes invisible.' When the youth heard this he was greatly desirous of obtaining the charmed garment, and told the giants that to end the contention they might as well let him have it. Other cogent reasons he also urged,

so that in the end they thought his advice to the purpose, and therefore acceded to his wishes. The youth then put on the cloak, and journeyed far, far away into strange countries.

A long, long time did he wander, and once more found himself in a great forest, where, also, two giants were at high words. 'What are you wrangling about, giants two?' he asked. 'Why, our father is dead,' cried they together, and we are sharing between us what he has left; everything but this sword is divided, and that we cannot agree about.' 'Oh, that matter may soon be arranged,' said the youth; 'make me a present of the weapon. I have far to go, and it will be useful to me in my travels.' 'We don't doubt it in the least,' sung out both giants at the same time; 'but this sword is not like unto other swords, for whosoever is touched with its point is instantly killed, and should its hilt be applied to a corpse, the dead man is at once restored to life again.' When the youth heard this, he longed the more to possess the weapon. 'Come, come, good fellows,' said he, 'give it to me, and then you'll have nothing to go to loggerheads about.' His persuasive words had their effect, and finally the giants let him have the sword. Having girt the costly weapon to his side, drawn on the six hundred mile boots, and cast the charmed mantle over his shoulders, he felt himself well equipped and appointed for his long and weary pilgrimage.

One evening after dark the youth came to a desert, to which, apparently, there was no end. Whilst looking about him for shelter, he espied in the distance a faint glimmering light amongst the trees. He approached it, and found

it proceeded from a miserable hovel in which dwelt a very old woman, who, from her looks, had lived more generations than other people winters. The youth entered, accosted her courteously, and requested permission to pass the night under her roof. 'Who art thou that speakest thus gently?' said she; 'though I have dwelt here whilst twelve oak forests have grown up, and twelve oak forests have rotted away, I have never before met one who has spoken to me in so friendly a manner.' 'I am a poor traveller in search of the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth,' rejoined he; 'perhaps, dear mother, thou canst tell me the way there?' 'No,' replied the old woman, 'that is not in my power; but I have dominion over the beasts of the field, and some one amongst them can possibly direct thee.' The youth thanked her for her kindness, and retired to rest.

At an early hour in the morning, just as the sun appeared in the east, the hostess ordered her subjects to appear before her. In obedience to the mandate of their queen, bears, wolves, foxes, and the rest, came bounding from the forest, and inquired her commands. 'Do any of you,' said she, 'know the way to the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth?' The beasts held a long consultation amongst themselves, but the result was that all were in ignorance of its whereabouts. 'I myself cannot render thee assistance,' said the old woman, addressing the youth; 'but many thousand miles from hence dwells my sister, who reigns over the fish of the sea. She, perhaps, may be able to direct thee.' On this he took a courteous leave of his kind entertainer, thanked her for her good counsel, and went on his way.

After wandering a long, long time, he came late one evening to another great wilderness. Whilst looking about him for a resting-place for the night, he perceived a faint light afar off. It proceeded from a ruinous-looking hut standing by the sea-shore; and on entering found it inhabited by an old, old woman, who, from her appearance, must have existed as many generations as other people months. After presenting her sister's regards, he asked to be accommodated with lodgings for the night. 'Who art thou who comest hither, and speakest thus gently to me?' she inquired. 'Though I have lived here whilst twenty and four oak forests have arrived at maturity, and twenty and four oak forests have perished, I have never before been so kindly addressed.' 'I am a poor wanderer in search of the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth,' replied the youth. 'Thou, dearest mother, canst, perhaps, put me in the right path!' 'No,' rejoined the old woman; 'but I have dominion over the fish of the sea, and, perhaps, some amongst them can assist thee in this matter.' The youth thanked her, and betook himself to his pallet.

At daybreak the queen summoned her subjects. Presently whales, dolphins, salmon, and other of the finny tribe, made their appearance to learn the behests of their royal mistress. She inquired if any one of them was acquainted with the way to the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth. The fish took counsel together, but none amongst them could give the desired information. 'Thou now seest,' said the old woman, 'that it is not in my power to aid thee; but I have another sister, dwelling many thousand miles from hence, who is queen of the birds

of the air. Go to her, and if she cannot help thee no one else is able.' The youth thanked her for her endeavours to serve him, took his leave, and resumed his wanderings.

When he had journeyed many thousand miles, he came late one evening to another interminable waste. Whilst looking about him for shelter he saw a far-away light. It led him to a very small and wretched-looking cabin, situated on a hill, in which lived an old, old woman, who, from her wrinkled countenance, one might have thought had lived as many generations as other people days. The youth stepped into the hut, presented her sister's regards, and begged a night's lodgings. 'Who art thou who speakest to me so courteously?' she inquired. 'Forty and eight oak forests have I seen flourish, and forty and eight oak forests decay; but in that while have I never before been so kindly accosted.' 'I am a poor wayfaring man,' replied the youth, 'in search of the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth. Canst thou, dear mother, put me in the right way?' 'No,' said the old woman, 'I myself am unacquainted with it; but I rule over the birds of the air; some one amongst them can, perhaps, assist thee.' After making his acknowledgments, the youth then withdrew for the night.

Before cockcrow in the morning the old woman called her dutiful subjects together. In a short time all the fowls of heaven,—the eagle, the swan, the falcon, and the rest,—flew, in obedience to her mandate, to her feet, to inquire her commands. She 'had summoned them,' she said, 'to know if they could show the way to the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth.' The birds held a long consultation amongst themselves, but not

one of them could point it out. The queen was highly incensed, and asked, 'Are you all here?' and on looking around her, added, 'but I don't see Phœnix.' 'He is not yet arrived,' replied her dutiful subjects.

After waiting a considerable time, however, the poor bird was seen cleaving the air, but seemingly so fatigued as hardly able to move his wings, and at length sunk nearly senseless to the ground. The congregated birds were rejoiced at seeing their favourite, but the old woman was very wroth, and demanded of him 'why he had tarried so long?' 'Be not displeased, royal madam,' replied he, after a pause to recover himself; 'I have flown a long, long way. I have been in a far-off country; to the beautiful palace east of the sun and north of the earth.' On hearing this the queen partially recovered her good humour, and addressing Phœnix, said, 'As a punishment for thy long absence, thou shalt return whence thou camest, and take this youth with thee.'

The bird thought this a somewhat hard sentence, but was obliged to obey. The youth now took leave of the old woman, and mounting Phœnix's back, was soon borne high in air, over mountains and valleys, and over blue seas and green forests.

When they had thus journeyed a very long way, Phœnix inquired of the youth 'if he could see anything.' 'Yes,' replied he; 'I think I perceive a blue cloud in the horizon.' 'That's the country for which we are bound,' rejoined the bird. When it drew towards evening, Phœnix again asked the youth 'what he could see?' 'I perceive a speck in the heavens,' he responded, 'which shines like the sun itself.' 'That's the palace to which we are going,'

said the bird. They held on their course until the night was well advanced, when Phœnix, for the third time, inquired of the youth 'what he saw.' 'I see,' said he, 'a magnificent palace, glittering all over with silver and gold.' 'Then we are at the end of our journey,' observed the bird.

The youth alighted outside the palace, and after that he had thanked Phœnix for his trouble, the latter winged his way through space to the place from whence he came.

At midnight, when all the 'Troll' (evil spirits, as said) were buried in a profound sleep, the youth knocked at the gates of the royal residence. The princess sent one of her maids of honour to ascertain who could be abroad at that late hour; and when she came to the portal he threw her the golden apple she had given him at the time of his nuptials. Recognizing the precious fruit as a present from herself, the maiden at once understood who was the visitor, and ran back to her mistress with the joyful intelligence; but the princess, thinking it too good to be true, would not believe it.

The other maid of honour was therefore sent to the gate, to whom the youth threw the second golden apple presented to him on the occasion in question. She likewise remembered her own gift, and hastened therefore to corroborate the truth of the glad tidings.

But the princess was still somewhat incredulous, and went herself to the portal. When, however, the youth presented her with the ring she herself had given him on the marriage day she was fully assured her bridegroom was really come. At once, therefore, she opened the gates,

and, as will be imagined, received him with the utmost joy and affection.

The youth and his charming bride passed the night in loving talk; but towards daylight the princess became much agitated and depressed in spirits, and said to him, 'We must now part: by all that thou holdest dear, hasten hence ere the "Troll" awake, or thy life will be sacrificed.' They then took an affectionate leave of each other, the bride shedding many bitter, bitter tears. The youth, however, disdained flight. He cast his cloak over his shoulder, girded the magical sword to his side, and prepared to enter into deadly conflict with the 'Troll.'

At an early hour in the morning there was much stir and bustle in the palace. The gates of the princess's tower were thrown open, and the 'Troll' came trooping in; but the youth, sword in hand, stood at the portal in readiness to receive them, and as they entered he cut off their heads in succession. It was a most bloody affair, and terminated not until one and all had met their doom.

When the day was somewhat advanced, the princess sent one of her attendants to ascertain how the combat had ended. The maiden soon returned with the glad news, that all the 'Troll' were slain, and that her champion was not only alive, but unhurt. The king's daughter was almost beside herself with joy, and thought all her troubles were now at an end.

She rushed into the arms of her lover, and when their first transports were over, said, 'Our happiness is now so great as to be incapable of increase unless it was that my deceased relations were once more in existence.' 'Show me where they are interred,' said the youth, 'and I will

do my best to fulfil thy wishes.' Together they then proceeded to where her father and kinsfolk were laid; when touching them, one after the other, with the hilt of his magical sword, they were all instantly restored to life.

There were now great rejoicings over the whole kingdom, and every one felt so grateful to our hero, that, at the death of the king, he was elected to the throne, and their own princess consequently became queen. He governed the kingdom with wisdom, and was much beloved by his subjects; and he and his consort, who bore him several brave sons and lovely and virtuous daughters, lived long and happily together, thus verifying the old Runish proverb, 'True love conquers all things.'

X. THE BLACKSMITH'S SON AND HIS THREE SWORDS.

THERE was once a blacksmith, and many such there be. He had finished his spring field labours, and was about to fell wood for a '*Kol-mila*' or charcoal-kiln. When he had eaten his breakfast, he said to his wife, 'Thou wilt come to me with my dinner, as usual, at the "clump of firs."' The woman promised to do as her husband desired, on which he proceeded to the forest and commenced work.

When at length it drew near to noon, his wife, *as he supposed her to be*, appeared with the meal, of which he partook with a good appetite; and afterwards, as is customary in the summer time, laid himself down to take a nap, and slept 'on the woman's arm.'

After reposing for a while, however, she rose up, and

went her way, taking the smith's axe with her. 'What art thou going to do with the axe?' inquired he; 'there are already four in the "Rack" at home.' But the woman replied not, and proceeded on her way. This appeared very extraordinary to the man; but he, thinking she would deposit the axe in some bush hard by where it could readily be found, thought no more of the matter, and set about piling up wood for the 'Kol-mila.'

Some short time afterwards the smith's *real wife* came to her husband with his dinner; but as he held somewhat aloof from her, and looked astonished, she inquired, 'Wilt thou not eat? the day is now far advanced.' 'Eat again?' roared out the smith, 'why, what is this for eating?' 'It is true I am very late,' responded the wife submissively, 'but I have not been idle in the while; for I have baked, that thou mightest have bread; and I have churned, that thou mightest have butter.' The poor man was now thoroughly bewildered, and thought to himself all could not be right. Agreeably to his wife's bidding, nevertheless, he sat himself down on the grass, and ate what he could; but he spoke not, considering it the wisest plan, happen what might, to let things take their course.

About seven years after this little incident the smith was one evening standing near his cottage chopping firewood, when a '*Here*' (an obsolete term) or boy, bearing an axe on his shoulder, accosted him. 'What is the matter with that axe?' inquired the man; 'does it need grinding, or fresh steeling?' As the stripling replied not, the smith took the implement out of his hand, and examined it very closely. At length he said, 'Why, there is nothing the matter with it!' and then suddenly

exclaimed, 'But the d—l take me if it's not my own axe!' 'If that's the case,' sung out the boy, 'then thou art my own father.'

The smith was now in a sad fix for having claimed the axe, and remembering the very peculiar circumstances under which it was lost, he could do no less than acknowledge his own flesh and blood. But he was terribly downcast, well knowing, if the story came out, the reception he was likely to meet with at home. There was no help for it, however; so putting the best face he could on the matter, he went boldly up to his wife and told her, 'That having so much work in hand, he had taken a "little orphan boy" to assist him in the smithy.'

For a time his better half protested against this arrangement, affirming that their family was already too numerous; but in the end the smith's entreaties prevailed, and the youth was taken into the house, and clothed and fed.

Time flew on. Hepre was both sharp and willing; and, for the reason that he was half Christian and half 'Troll,' was possessed, in addition, with extraordinary strength. But as a set-off to these good qualities, was a most terrible glutton. He had so voracious an appetite, indeed, that his father was at length quite unable to keep him supplied with sufficient food.

One day, therefore, the smith went to the king's palace, and inquired of the head cook, if he wanted a youth to help him in the kitchen. 'Yes,' replied the man, 'I am just now in the greatest need of a scullion, and the sooner he comes the better.' The smith was overjoyed; for, said he to himself, 'When my hopeful son gets into the royal kitchen, he is sure of a bellyfull;' and with this con-

solatory reflection he wended his way homewards, and related to his old woman the great success of his mission.

When the youth learnt the news, he said, 'Father, it is my desire that thou forge for me three swords: one to weigh sixty pounds; a second, one hundred and twenty; and a third, two hundred and forty pounds; and that, in addition, thou providest me with three *Linne-Rockar*, or linen coats (for the purpose, probably, of disguise, or concealing his dirty garb), one to each of the weapons. If thou doest this, I shall gain so much wealth that it will never more be needful for thee to work in the smithy.'

The poor smith had the greatest possible difficulty to procure sufficient iron and steel for the three swords, but he dared not oppose his son's wishes. At length, however, all the weapons were completed; but the heaviest of them, owing to wastage in the furnace, weighed only 220 instead of 240 pounds. Here was very wroth, and said, 'If thou wert not my father, as thou art, I would prove it on thy own person.' When the smith saw his son's anger he was frightened, and kept silence. 'But,' he thought to himself, 'although thou art so strong, thou perhaps will have enough to do to wield the sword; for I know, to my cost, how difficult it was to lift it from the fire on to the anvil.'

The youth now took the three swords, and the three 'Linne-Rockar,' and hid them in the cleft of a rock, near the house; and afterwards accompanied his father to the palace, and entered into the service of the chief cook, as agreed on.

It happened on one occasion, when the king of the country was engaged in a naval expedition, so sudden and

terrible a storm arose that every one believed the ship in which he was embarked, together with all on board, would perish beneath the waves. This fearful tempest was raised by the *Hafs*, or sea 'Troll,' who only stayed it, and permitted the sovereign to land, on his promising to give them his three handsome daughters.

When, therefore, the king returned to his palace, he caused proclamation to be made,—'That if any man and warrior would venture his life, and save the three princesses, he should have one of them to wife, and reign, moreover, over the half of his kingdom.' But, with the exception of a tailor, who talked very big, no one volunteered to wage battle with the terrible 'Hafs-Troll.'

The time having arrived when the king's daughter should be given up to the monsters, there was a great wailing throughout the land; but the king, and his wife, the queen, sorrowed the most. The eldest princess, the first to be sacrificed, was conducted to the sea-shore with much pomp and ceremony; and all the people accompanied her on the way. When the mournful procession reached the appointed spot, the maiden sat herself down on the white sand, rested her cheek on her hand, and shed many, many bitter tears; but the courageous tailor, forgetting his great promises, ascended a neighbouring tree for safety.

Here, in the mean while, went to his master, the cook, and asked permission to go into the town for a time, to amuse himself. This was granted, and hasting to his father's cottage, he girded on the smaller of the swords,—that which weighed sixty pounds,—drew the 'Linne-Rock' over his clothes, and, with his faithful dog 'Trusty' at his heels, bent his steps towards the sea-beach.

When he perceived the king's daughter he went up to her, and saluted her courteously. 'Why, beautiful princess,' said he, 'sittest thou here alone and sorrowful?' 'I may well be sad,' replied she. 'My father was in danger of shipwreck, and, as a ransom for his life, promised me to a terrible "Hafs-Troll," whom I am fearful will soon come and take me, poor maiden.' 'Is there no man and warrior to be found in thy father's dominions,' further inquired the youth, that can save thy life?' 'Yes,' rejoined the princess; 'there is a tailor sitting up in that tree who has promised to deliver me.' Here, on hearing this, looked up, and seeing the tailor perched on the very uppermost branch, smiled and said, 'Place no dependence, maiden, on such a champion; but if thou wilt "louse" me for a short time I will save thy life.' The king's daughter thought this a very bold request, but ventured not, in her great distress, to gainsay him.

Here now turned to his dog, and said, 'Watch well, "Trusty."' He then laid his head on the maiden's knee, whilst she 'loused' him; but whilst thus occupied, she drew forth from her mantle a red silken thread, and, unperceived by him, braided it in the youth's hair.

A great noise and commotion was now heard in the sea. The waves rolled far up on the dry land, and presently a hideous monster with three heads, and followed by a dog, large as a year-old calf, ascended from the deeps. 'Where is the king's daughter who was promised me?' inquired the 'Troll.' 'She is here,' replied Here,' 'but thou hadst better approach nearer, that we may have some conversation together.' 'Dost thou, little wretch, mean to make game of me?' rejoined the

monster. 'No,' said the youth; 'I have come to fight thee for the young princess.' 'Very good,' answered the 'Troll'; 'but our dogs ought first to try their powers with each other.' To which proposition Here expressed himself as quite agreeable.

The youth and the 'Troll' now set their dogs on to fight, and a terrible combat ensued between them; but in the end 'Trusty' proved the victor; for tearing open the throat of his antagonist, the latter fell dead to the ground.

'Thou seest how thy dog has been served,' said Here to the 'Troll,' 'and the like fate shall shortly be thine.' With these words he drew his sixty pound sword from out of the scabbard, and rushing on the monster, hewed away with so much fury, and to such good purpose, that his three heads presently rolled into the sea.

On witnessing the issue of the fight, the maiden exclaimed with heartfelt joy, 'Oh, now I am saved!' Afterwards she endeavoured to prevail on the stranger warrior to accompany her to her father's palace, to receive the honours and rewards due to his great services. But Here refused the invitation, modestly observing 'that his aid had been very trivial and not worth naming.' After possessing himself of some pearls and other ornaments, worn by the 'Hafs-Troll,' and taking a courteous leave of the princess, the youth then went on his way.

Whilst the combat lasted between Here and the monster, the tailor sat trembling in the tree, awaiting the result; but when the danger was over, and the youth departed, he descended from thence to the ground, drew his sword, and compelled the king's daughter to take an oath that it was he, and he only, that had rescued her.

The two afterwards proceeded in company to the palace, where the appearance of the princess created much joy. The king immediately ordered a magnificent banquet to be prepared, at which the tailor sat by the king's side, and was looked on as the most valiant champion of the whole court.

The next day the second princess was to be consigned to the 'Hafs-Troll,' when, as on the preceding occasion, loud lamentations were heard throughout the palace; but as the brave tailor had saved the king's eldest daughter, many thought he would be able to rescue this one likewise.

When the appointed hour arrived the princess was attended to the sea-shore by great multitudes of people, who commiserated her hard lot. On reaching the water's edge she sat down and wept so bitterly that her tears fell fast on the white sand; but the valorous tailor, not deeming it altogether prudent to remain at her side, ascended a tree, as before, and concealed himself amongst the branches.

Whilst all this was going on Here went to the cook, his master, and said, 'Sir, give me again leave to go into the town to amuse myself; for yesterday I had not time to look about me properly.' 'Should the tailor be victorious over the "Troll" to-day,' replied the man, 'there will be a still greater banquet at the palace than yesterday, and I am alone to prepare the viands. There stands an empty tub that holds eighteen pails of water,' he went on to say, 'and I have no one to assist me to even a single pitcher full.' 'But if I first fill the tub,' replied the youth, 'wilt thou then permit me to go?' As his master thought within himself, 'It must be late in the evening before Here

can possibly accomplish the task,' he, in consequence, seemed half inclined to give way; but the youth at once seized the tub with both hands, ran off to the well, and presently returned with it full to overflowing. The cook was astonished; and now that he had witnessed his wonderful prowess (coupled with a bribe of some beautiful pearls despoiled from the 'Troll' on the preceding day, that Here slipped into the man's hand), he no longer hesitated in granting his request, and therefore said, 'Go in peace, but be not long away.' The youth then ran home for his sword — that which weighed 120 pounds — drew his 'Linne-Rock' over his clothes, and, followed by 'Trusty,' set forth on his way to the sea-shore.

When he came to the spot where the king's daughter sat and wept, the tailor, who, as on the preceding day, was in a tree-top hard by, was exceedingly rejoiced. Here, however, pretended not to observe him, but making his obeisance to the princess, said, 'Beautiful maiden, why sittest thou here all disconsolate and alone?' 'I may well be sorrowful,' she replied. 'My father was in danger of perishing during a storm at sea, and, to save his life, was induced to promise me to a fearful "Troll," who will soon come and take me, poor maiden.' 'Is there no one to be found in thy father's kingdom,' inquired the youth, 'that can save thy life?' 'Yes,' responded the princess; there sits a gallant tailor in yonder tree, who has promised to rescue me, as he has done my sister.'

On hearing these words Here looked up, and seeing the tailor among the topmost branches, smiled, and said, 'Rely not on such a hero; but if thou wilt "louse" me for a while I will save thy life.' This the king's daughter

thought an audacious request, but in her great trouble and distress, thought it best to comply.

Here then said to his dog, 'Keep good guard, Trusty,' and afterwards laid his head on the maiden's lap, that she might 'louse' him; but the king's daughter, in the while, drew a black silk thread from her reticule and, unperceived, wove it amongst his long tresses.

Presently 'Trusty' began to growl, when a great noise and uproar was heard seaward. The waves rolled high up on to the dry land, and an enormous 'Hafs-Troll,' dreadful to look on, with six heads, and followed by a dog, large as a two-year old ox, made its appearance on the beach.

'Where is the princess that was promised me?' inquired the monster. 'She is here,' responded Here; 'but thou must come nearer, that we may have a chat together.' 'Perhaps, little monkey,' replied the 'Troll,' 'thou wilt fight me?' 'I came for that purpose,' rejoined the youth, whose wrath was somewhat excited by the contemptuous epithet applied to him. 'Yesterday,' the 'Troll' went on to say, 'thou slew my brother; to-day I will be thy bane. Nevertheless, our dogs ought first to fight.' 'To that I have no kind of objection,' replied Here.

Both parties now egged on their favourites, and a most desperate combat ensued between them; but it ended in the like manner as on the preceding day, in 'Trusty' tearing open the throat of his antagonist, who sunk lifeless to the ground.

'Thou seest how thy dog has been served,' said Here to the 'Troll,' 'and the like fate shall presently be thine.' With these words he brandished his sword that weighed

120 pounds, and slashed away so desperately and effectually, as presently to strike off all the six heads of the monster. Such was the end of the second 'Hafs-Troll.'

When the king's daughter saw this she rejoiced greatly, and clapping her hands together, exclaimed in ecstasy, 'Now I am freed!' She afterwards begged the stranger champion to follow her to her father's palace, there to receive the honours and rewards due to his great services; but Here refused, alleging, as an excuse, that the aid he had rendered her was too insignificant to deserve mention. Helping himself to some valuables he found on the person of the 'Hafs-Troll,' and after taking a respectful leave of the princess, he then hurriedly departed.

Whilst the battle between the youth and the monster lasted, the tailor sat half dead with fright in the tree-top; but now that all peril to himself was over, and Here gone, he hastily descended, drew his sword, and threatened the king's daughter with instant death unless she swore that it was he, and he only, who had saved her. The princess was anything but agreeable to this proposal; but being in fear of her life, was necessitated to submit to the hard terms.

The tailor then escorted her to the palace, where they were received with great rejoicings and marks of honour. A more magnificent banquet than on the preceding day was prepared. The tailor sat next to the king, and was treated with the utmost deference and respect by every one; and if his own words, during the repast, were to be believed, he was the greatest hero of the age.

On the third day the king's youngest daughter was to

be surrendered to the 'Hafs-Troll,' when even greater sorrow was shown than on the two preceding occasions; and that not only in the palace, but over the whole kingdom, for every one held the young princess very dear, not only on account of her great beauty, but her amiable disposition. As, however, the valorous tailor had already rescued her two sisters, and as he himself was by no means sparing of big words, unbounded confidence was placed in his gallant efforts on her behalf. But she would not allow herself to be comforted, and wept very bitterly. As with the other princesses, she was escorted by multitudes to the sea-shore, where she seated herself near to the water.

But the tailor again forgot all his great promises and, as was his wont, climbed up into the tree for safety.

Whilst these things were taking place, Here went to the cook and said, 'Master, give me once more leave to amuse myself in the town. I sh'an't be in a hurry to ask for another holiday.' To back his request, he at the same time slipped some pieces of gold into his hand. The man, well knowing the youth's strength, and prizing his liberality, could not refuse the trifling boon, and so said, 'Go in peace, but don't be long absent; for if the tailor conquers to-day, there will be a still greater feast than ever.'

Having obtained the desired permission, Here ran home for his third sword, that weighing 220 pounds, but which by rights should have been 20 pounds heavier. When, however, he flourished the weapon in the air, and remarked how light it was, he waxed very wroth with the blacksmith. 'Wert thou not my own father, as thou art, thou thyself shouldst have a taste of it; for it is now very ques-

tionable whether or no I return home alive.' He nevertheless girded on the weapon, drew the 'Linne-Rock' over his clothes, and, with 'Trusty' at his heels, went his way to the sea-side.

When he reached the place where the king's daughter sat and bemoaned herself, the tailor, who was on his usual perch on the tree-top, rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Here, however, made believe not to see him, but, going straightway up to the princess, courteously saluted her. 'Beauteous maiden,' said he, 'why dost thou sit here disconsolate and alone? and why do so many tears course down thy lovely cheeks?' 'I may well weep,' replied she; 'my father, to save himself from being swallowed up by the waves, promised me to a fierce "Hafs-Troll," who will soon come and fetch me, unhappy maiden.' When the youth saw her so greatly distressed, his heart beat quick with emotion, for he had never before set eyes on so charming and amiable a being. 'Is there no one in thy father's dominion,' he inquired, 'who can save thy life?' 'Yes,' she replied, 'up in that tree sits a valiant tailor; he has promised to rescue me, as he has already done my two sisters.'

Here, on hearing these words, looked up into the tree, and observing the tailor in his place of concealment, laughed, and said, 'Noble maiden, rely not on such a champion; but if thou wilt "louse" me for a time, I will venture my life for thy sake.' 'Willingly,' replied the king's daughter, for she held the youth dear on account of his kindness, and the interest he took in her welfare.

Ordering 'Trusty' to keep a sharp look-out, Here then laid his head on the princess's lap, and slept whilst

she relieved it from its troublesome occupants. Whilst so employed she observed the silken threads her sisters had woven in his hair, and thought it very strange. Following their example, nevertheless, she drew forth from her scarlet cloak a white one, and entwined it, unobserved, amongst his locks.

'Trusty' now began to bark furiously, and a great noise was heard in the sea. Here then said to the princess, 'It is time we rise up. Give me thy apron, charming maiden; we may perhaps find use for it.' The king's daughter did as she was desired, when the youth forthwith divided it with his sword into twelve several pieces.

Presently there was a frightful commotion in the water. The billows rolled far on to the dry land, and soon a hideous 'Hafs-Troll,' with twelve heads, the one more fearful than the other, and accompanied by a gigantic dog, as large as the biggest bull, emerged from the deeps.

'Where is the princess that was promised me?' inquired the monster. 'She's here,' replied Here; 'but come closer, that we may have a confab together.' 'Perhaps, little abortion, thou meanest to kill me, as thou hast already done my brothers,' sneeringly observed the 'Troll.' 'That's my intention,' rejoined the youth. 'Wait a bit, my friend,' said the monster; 'thou hast now met with thy match. But before we ourselves enter the lists,' he went on to say, 'our dogs ought to take a turn.' 'With all my heart,' responded Here.

Backed by their respective masters, the animals now set to, and a very fearful fight it was; but at length the

'Troll's' dog seized hold of poor 'Trusty,' and at a single gulp swallowed him bodily.

Though this was a somewhat gloomy omen for the youth, he was not a whit discouraged; and drawing his 220 pound sword, he ran at the monster, and slashed away right manfully. But the 'Troll's' twelve heads were possessed of a wonderful property; for so soon as one was cut off, and rolled into the water, it was immediately revivified, and hopped back again to its proper place. Here, observing this, cried out to the king's daughter, 'Noble maiden, so soon as I chop off a head, place a piece of thy apron on the stump, or else it will quicken once more.' Thus saying, the youth began afresh the work of decapitation; and as the princess implicitly followed his directions in applying the patches in question, the seven out of the 'Troll's' twelve heads, which fell in rapid succession, were no longer able to resume their original position. The monster, now finding that he was likely very shortly to be reduced to his trunk, was desirous of coming to terms with Here. 'Replace thy sword in its sheath, I pray thee,' said he to him; 'only allow me to depart from hence, and I will leave the maiden in peace.' But the youth, who was in a great rage, replied, 'Think not, now that thou art at my mercy, that I will permit thee to quit this spot alive,' and suiting the action to the word, he swung his weapon on high and dealt such desperate blows at the 'Troll,' that his remaining five heads presently cumbered the ground. And thus the third of them met his bane.

When the combat was over, the king's daughter ex-

claimed with extreme rapture, 'Now am I rescued!' She then thanked her champion for his courageous assistance, and prayed him to follow her to her father's palace, there to receive honours and rewards; but Here declined the invitation, saying that the little aid he had rendered her was undeserving of the least recompense. After despoiling the 'Troll' of some of his valuables, and taking a loving farewell of the beautiful princess, he therefore retraced his steps homewards.

Whilst the conflict lasted the tailor, from terror, dared not move hand or foot; but now that the monster was defunct, and Here out of the way, he quickly dropped down from his perch in the tree-top on to the ground, drew his sword, and insisted on the princess's swearing that it was he, and he only, who had delivered her from the 'Hafs-Troll.' The king's daughter thought this very hard, because her inclinations were in favour of the young champion who had so valiantly exposed himself to save her; but her life being in jeopardy, she was obliged to comply with the poltroon's terms.

In company they therefore proceeded towards the royal palace. On the way the princess was very silent, and said little; but the tailor walked by her side with a proud step and bearing, as if he had been the bravest of the brave. When the king observed them approaching he was very, very glad, for he had never again expected to see his daughter alive; and as a distinguishing mark of honour, he and his whole court set out to meet and escort them home. Afterwards there were great rejoicings throughout the kingdom, because the three princesses

were rescued from the terrible 'Hafs-Troll,' and the renown of the courageous tailor spread far and wide.

A very great banquet was now commanded, to commemorate the happy event; but when the appointed hour had arrived no signs of the feast were apparent. This displeased the king, who sent his youngest daughter to the chief cook to inquire the cause of the delay; but the man alleged, in excuse, that his servant, the 'scullion,' had been absent, and that he of himself was unable to make the needful preparations. As the noble maiden, however, was passing the scullery she noticed that the scullion turned his head aside, as if desirous of avoiding observation. This she thought very singular, and eyeing him attentively, she recognized in him, to her extreme astonishment, no less a personage than the champion who had recently so valiantly fought in her behalf. The princess was delighted, and ran hastily to her sisters to communicate to them the strange discovery she had made.

Whilst the king's daughters were together talking the matter over, the king, their father, who was near at hand, overheard what was said. He was astonished beyond measure, and strictly enjoined the maidens to tell him everything without the least reserve. The youngest of the princesses, in obedience to his commands, then related, from first to last, what had happened; and her sisters corroborated to the letter all that she had said. The king was very indignant at the tailor's duplicity, but rejoiced at the same time to be enabled to reward the real champion. He therefore commanded the immediate attendance of the scullion.

When the messenger entered the kitchen there was

great wonderment amongst the royal servants. At first Here refused to obey; 'for how,' said he, 'is such an one as I, humbly born and homely clad, to appear in the "presence."' But the danger of disobedience having been pointed out to him, he at length went boldly up into the banqueting hall, where his Majesty sat at table with all his guests. The tailor, who was on the right hand of the king, on seeing the champion who had saved the lives of the three princesses, turned pale as death, and looked as if he would sink into the earth; but the king turned to Here and inquired of him, in a loud voice, 'Was it thou who preserved my daughters?' 'Every one says it was the tailor who rescued them from the "Troll,"' replied the youth with a sarcastic smile. 'No,' exclaimed the king's daughters with one voice; 'it was thou and thou only who delivered us, and in thy hair sit the silken threads that we entwined amongst it whilst "lousing" thee.' Saying which, they all ran up to Here and embraced him, and whilst thus occupied, each one sought amongst his flowing tresses for her own memorial.

Addressing the youth, the king then said, 'As it is to thee alone that the princesses are indebted for their lives, thou shalt be rewarded for thy bravery. I give thee my youngest daughter to wife, and as her portion, the half of my kingdom and wealth.'

The nuptials were soon afterwards celebrated with much pomp, and there were great rejoicings and festivities in the palace; but the valorous tailor stole away, crestfallen, from the banquet, and no more was ever heard of him or of his wondrous achievements.

XI. THE LADY OF PINTORP.

His Satanic Majesty plays a prominent part in the Scandinavian superstitions. The following popular legend was told me, almost *verbatim*, by a peasant, my guide when one day shooting black game in the wilds of Bohus Lan.

There once lived—and it is many years ago—a very wicked and covetous woman, at an estate called Pintorp (now Ericksberg). She was the widow of a very rich nobleman, and had immense possessions, as also a vast number of serfs and dependents. In her palace were prisons wherein many innocent people languished and died. One, in particular, was called the flogging-room, where those who had specially offended her, or disobeyed her commands, were stripped, hung up, and cruelly scourged with rods. She caused savage dogs to be let loose on beggars and others; so that at length no stranger ventured on entering her domain. She had two step-children, whom she endeavoured to get rid of by ill-treatment and starvation; but in this matter she was foiled through the kindness of one of her handmaids, who, out of the scanty fare allotted to herself, supplied them daily with a little food. Finding her object was not thus to be gained, her fury rose to such a pitch that one day she ordered the poor creatures to be cast into a heated oven. Then was heard outside of the window a sardonic laugh, on which the wicked woman turned pale, as she well knew from whom it proceeded.

Through her stewards and bailiffs, who were equally cruel and hard-hearted as herself, she treated her numerous dependents like so many brute beasts, setting them tasks beyond their strength and ability to perform, and, withal, half famished them. Her avarice, moreover, was such that if any one of them had a cow, a horse, or other property of value that was coveted by her, she would always hit on some prétence or other to get possession of it. She, besides, often drove them from house and home, as is said in the song :—

'I, ferocious bear,
Have, like the eagle, caught the prey in my talons.'

It was her custom every morning at sunrise to stand on the steps of her palace, in front of which her people were expected to assemble preparatory to going to their daily labour. One morning an unfortunate cottager came somewhat late, which greatly enraged her; and she, in consequence, overwhelmed him with curses and abuse, and, as a punishment for his remissness, ordered him before evening to cut down the largest oak on the estate, and to convey it—whole as it was, and crown foremost—to Pintorp! If he failed in fulfilling to the letter these her behests he should be driven, she said, from house and home, and his cow, and other little property, would fall to her.

In obedience to the commands of his imperious mistress, the unhappy man repaired, in sorrowful mood, to the wood, well knowing the misfortunes that awaited himself and wife and children. Whilst wandering about, he hardly knew whither, and pondering on these things, he met a little old man, of a benignant countenance, who inquired 'why he looked so downcast.' 'Because,' replied the poor

fellow, 'unless God helps me, I am undone.' And he then went on to relate to the stranger the task the lady had imposed on him. 'That oak thou seest there,' rejoined the old man, 'is the largest in the wood; cut it down, seat thyself on the trunk, and Eric Gyllenstierna and Svante Baner * shall draw it to the palace.'

The cottager forthwith set to work, and at the third stroke of the axe the tree fell. As directed, he then seated him on the trunk, which, crown foremost, began to move as if drawn by horses; and presently its pace became so rapid that it whirled, as it were, through the air, the branches, in the while, carrying away all the fences and gates that impeded its progress.

On the steps of the palace stood the Lady of Pintorp, who, on seeing the apparition, turned white as ashes; for the steeds that drew the oak she, and she only, saw and recognized. The tree struck against the portal, and one of the horses fell on its knees. Then was heard a fearful voice, 'What! dost thou stumble, Svante?'

One evening, after that the lady had passed the day in cursing and abusing her dependents, an earthquake, as it were, shook the palace, and the next instant, and amid a dense cloud of dust, raised as if by a whirlwind, a black carriage, drawn by two black horses, came thundering through the gateway. A gentleman dressed in black alighted from the vehicle, and, ascending the staircase, proceeded into the drawing-room. The lady well knew her visitor, and that her time was come. She trembled all over, and her knees smote each other. She prayed to be reprieved for three years; afterwards for three months;

* The deceased husband and brother of the lady.

but only a few minutes on earth were allowed her. She then petitioned that her chaplain, her chamberlain, and her lady-in-waiting, might be permitted to accompany her, which request was granted.

They were all quickly seated in the carriage, and took their departure, the frightened people seeing nothing but a lengthened stream of black along the road. The latter was broader than other roads, even, and good. At length they arrived at a magnificent mansion, such, at least, it was in appearance. This was the black man's abode. He escorted his guests up a handsome flight of steps, and afterwards ushered them into a brilliant saloon, where the lady was divested of her own habiliments, and instead thereof clad in an uncouth grey dress and leaden slippers. Three times the black man combed her hair, and the blood ran from her dark locks. Three times he danced with her, and her slippers were steeped in the blood that ran from her feet on to the floor.

After the first dance she asked and obtained leave to give her chamberlain the gold ring she wore, and when she placed it on his finger the flesh was seared. After the second dance she presented her lady-in-waiting with her keys, which burnt the woman's hand. But after the third dance a trap-door in the floor suddenly opened, and the lady was hurled into a fearful abyss, whence arose sulphureous smoke and flames. The chaplain attempted to look down the yawning gulf, but at the instant a spark from the fire beneath flew into one of his eyes, the sight of which was lost to him for ever.

When the lady's attendants had witnessed all these horrors, the black man gave them permission to depart,

and assured them of their safety, provided no one of the company looked behind. They seated themselves in the same carriage in which they came. The road was equally broad and level as before, and the horses proceeded at a rapid pace; but the curiosity of the lady-in-waiting was so great that she could not resist turning her head round. At the same instant the carriage, the steeds, and the road itself vanished, and they found themselves in a wild and wooded morass, from whence they were unable to find their way home until after the lapse of three whole years!

At Pintorp, my informant went on to say, there was long to be seen, and may be so now for all I know to the contrary, the trunk of the great oak tree spoken of, as a memorial of the lady's brutality; as also the bed and slippers of this wicked woman. And to this day the people of the neighbouring hamlet pass with fear and trembling the part of the palace she is believed to have inhabited; for here, in a secret passage, and in a walled-up room, evil spirits hold their wassails at the midnight hour.

THE END.

00056920

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018